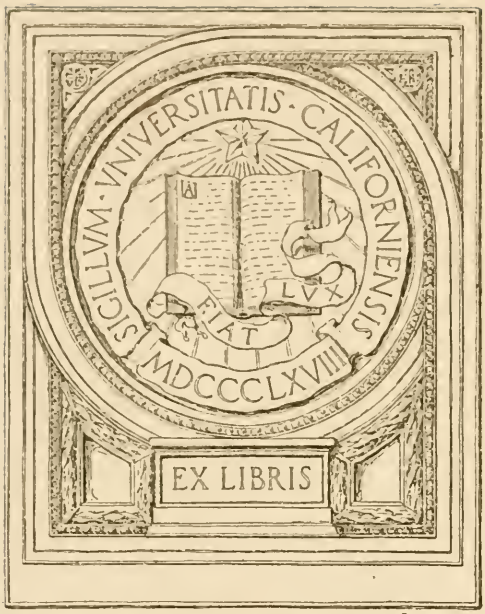
MINSTRELSY OF THE SCOTTISH BORDER

ALFRED NOYES



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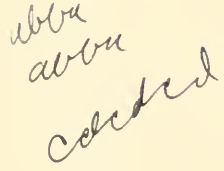

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THE MINSTRELSY OF THE SCOTTISH BORDER

A' for the sake of their true loves;
For them they'll see nae mair.—

See p. 4.

The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border

COLLECTED BY

SIR WALTER SCOTT

EDITED AND ARRANGED
WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES
BY

ALFRED NOYES

AND SIX ILLUSTRATIONS
BY

JOHN MACFARLANE

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TO

MARGARET AND KATHARINE BRUCE

THIS EDITION OF A FAMOUS BOOK OF THEIR COUNTRY

IS DEDICATED

WITH THE BEST WISHES OF ITS EDITOR

395363

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Sir Patrick Spens	1
The Wife of Usher's Well	6
Clerk Saunders	9
The Twa Corbies	15
Barthram's Dirge	16
The Broom of Cowdenknows	18
The Flowers of the Forest	23
The Laird of Muirhead	25
Hobbie Noble	26
Græme and Bewick	32
The Douglas Tragedy	39
The Lament of the Border Widow	43
Fair Helen	45
Fause Foodrage	47
The Gay Goss-Hawk	53
The Silly Blind Harper	60
Kinmont Willie	64
Lord Maxwell's Good-night	72
The Battle of Otterbourne	75
O Tell Me how to Woo Thee	81
The Queen's Marie	83
A Lyke-Wake Dirge	88
The Lass of Lochroyan	90
The Young Tamlane	97

CONTENTS

	PAGE
The Cruel Sister	108
Thomas the Rhymer	113
Armstrong's Good-night	128

APPENDIX

Jellon Grame	129
Rose the Red and White Lilly	133
O Gin My Love were Yon Red Rose	142
Annan Water	143
The Dowie Dens of Yarrow	146
Archie of Ca'field	149
Jock o' the Side	154
The Battle of Bothwell Bridge	160
The Dæmon-Lover	163
Johnie of Breadislee	166

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

"A' for the sake of their true loves;
For them they'll see nae mair" . . *Frontispiece*

"And will you be so kind, fair may,
As come out and point my way?" . . *Facing page* 16

"O they rade on, and on they rade,
And a' by the light of the moon" . . ,, 48

"'Now sound out, trumpets!' quo' Buccleuch;
"'Let's waken Lord Scroope right merrilee!'" . . ,, 64

"The Gordons good, in English blood,
They steep'd their hose and shoon" . . ,, 80

"But fast she gript the milk-white steed,
And pu'd the rider down" . . ,, 112

INTRODUCTION

FEW books can give more delight by the winter's fire, when the sea-wind shakes the windows and roars in the chimney; few are better to read among the summer woods or the blowing heather; fewer still can bring a fresher breath of nature across the minds of those whose windows are only shaken by the traffic of modern cities; and perhaps, in this day of small decadent subtleties and malodorous morbidities of "Art," no book in the world can be of better service to the cause of true poetry than the famous *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. Here, certainly, turning from the lotus-flowers of most modern verse, as from the gardens of Circe and her swine, we "feel the brine salt on our lips" and the large Homeric air again. The poets here are "trumpets that sing to battle"; and, in their simple truth of speech, the "unacknowledged legislators of the world."

The present edition seeks to remove two serious obstacles which have hitherto interfered with the complete enjoyment of the book—first, the

absurdly large mass of prefaces, appendices, "advertisements," footnotes, headnotes and what-not, wherein Sir Walter Scott saw fit to bury the gems he had just discovered and collected. The bulk of these notes really does become on examination quite ludicrous. It not only prevents the printing of the book in a convenient form, but we have our unwilling eyes dragged down from a glorious ballad to a footnote wherein, for instance, we are informed that a "hostelrie" means an "inn." So huge is the mass of these notes—hundreds of them quite irrelevant, and ranging over all the literatures of the world in order to find the most remote parallels to some extremely simple verse—so huge is the mass of these disquisitions that, after cutting the ballads bodily out of the edition before us, its four bulky volumes remain apparently intact and undiminished. The second obstacle to the complete efficiency of the book was the curious intermixture of a certain amount of thoroughly bad and paltry work which blurred the effect of the great ballads and poems, and was certainly a serious blot on Scott's achievement in collecting these latter; for it does indicate a lack of the artistic conscience and also of a right respect for some of the greatest things in our great poetic literature. Sir Walter Scott was of an amiable nature where ladies were concerned; but he carried his amiability too far when, amongst such minstrelsy as the "grand old ballad of Sir Patrick Spens," he included the fatuous

outpourings of Miss Anna Seward, whose odd blend of English and Scottish phraseology must strike even an Englishman as ludicrous. Here is a specimen of her "Freebooter's Farewell"—

"Farewell, my deep glens, speck't wi' sloes,
O' tangled hazels full!
Farewell, my thymy lea, where lows
My kine, and glourin' bull . . .

Farewell, my gowk, thy warning note
Thou aft-times ca'd aloud,
Tho' o' the word that thrilled thy throat,
Gude faith, I was na proud!

And, pawkie gowk, sae free that mad'st,
Or ere I hanged be,
Would I might learn if true thou said'st,
When sae thou said'st to me."

Another even more lamentable instance, from an artistic point of view, is the quite superfluous second part to the "Flowers of the Forest" (which the kindly Sir Walter also added to please a lady author), a second part so hopelessly devoid of even the most elementary merit that it is really a desecration of the tender charm of the first part to print them side by side. The removal of Scott's annotations, some superfluous matter of this kind, and one or two pieces of secondary merit, leaves us with a small volume of poems, many of which are acknowledged to be among the finest rough diamonds unearthed from all the fields of poetry. These we have tried to re-arrange with a view to the unity of the book

and to the reading of the poems consecutively. They have been grouped, therefore, in such a way as to make the transitions from ballad to ballad easy and effective, and to display each poem in its best setting and light.

A few of these poems have been saved from their friends, and made familiar to the world at large by anthologies. "The grand old ballad of Sir Patrick Spens" (as Coleridge called it in one of his poems) is known wherever English poetry is loved, though not perhaps in the full form given here. Its opening is one of the simplest and grandest, perhaps the simplest and grandest, in all heroic poetry. The openings of at least two of the world's immortal epics are less majestic than the two first lines of that rude and simple ballad—

> "The King sits in Dunfermline town
> Drinking the blude-red wine."

A few others, like the "Twa Corbies," "Fair Helen," and "The Flowers of the Forest," have reached the wide public of the *Golden Treasury*. The "Twa Corbies" is one of the grimmest lyrics in any language, and all the more powerful for its brevity. Every line is transfused with the very essence of romance, from the melancholy loneliness of the opening line and the bitter tragic suggestion of

> "His lady's ta'en another mate"

to the final verses whose wild music seems to be

caught up into the cry of the wind over desolate moorlands. The raw cold vowel-sounds of the last two lines are incomparable in their naked realism—

> "O'er his white banes, when they are bare,
> The wind shall blaw for evermair."

"Fair Helen," again, is a poem of great tenderness and beauty; and "The Flowers of the Forest" has a haunting charm of its own in a more delicate and modern way. But another brief ballad (also lamenting Flodden) was worthier than the last, we think, of a place in Palgrave's famous anthology. The "Laird of Muirhead" is very brief, and it is practically unknown. We have set it next to "The Flowers of the Forest" in the present volume, so that the reader can make his own comparison. It is unknown to the anthologist; yet for simple truth and almost Shakespearean sincerity and power of expression it is surely worthy of a place in any representative collection of English poetry. There is very little poetry outside Shakespeare in which such words as "budge" and "pith" are used with natural force and passion; and when a poet uses them as "to the manner born" it means, in certain rare circumstances, that he is writing from the heart of a language, perhaps from the heart of a people, and sometimes he will produce something as stirring as the "Laird of Muirhead."

Perhaps the greatest of all the romantic love-

ballads, not only in this book, but in any book, is "Clerk Saunders," which we have placed third in this volume. "Nothing can have been better imagined," says an old critic of this poem, "than the circumstance of killing Clerk Saunders while his mistress was asleep; nor can anything be more natural or pathetic than the three stanzas that follow, beginning with

"Clerk Saunders he started, and Margaret she turned,
etc."

Nothing could be simpler or more pathetic, we may add, than the cry of Margaret in the forest to her dead lover nigh his grave—a deeply tragic forewhisper of which is surely heard in the first two lines of the second stanza—

"'A bed, a bed,' Clerk Saunders said,
'A bed for you and me!'"—

a whisper whose full meaning is only made clear in that later tragic cry of May Margaret in the forest to her lover's ghost—

"'Is there ony room at your head, Saunders?
Is there ony room at your feet?
Or ony room at your side, Saunders,
Where fain, fain, I wad sleep?'"

For depth of passion this poem again is almost unrivalled outside Shakespeare. The grave-diggers' scene in *Hamlet* has curious points of comparison with it, and it is worthy of the comparison. We may point out, in passing, that

Clerk Saunders also was something of a scholar and casuist.

Two poems, "Hobbie Noble" and "Græme and Bewick," we have included, side by side, as work of a somewhat ruder kind. They stand to their companions as a shepherd's hut to a border chieftain's stronghold; and, in some ways, their versification is distinctly less pleasing. On the other hand, they have a peculiar crude chivalry of feeling which gives them a general effect of great beauty. The character of Hobbie Noble is a very vital creation, and reminds one, in many ways, of some of Mr. Thomas Hardy's rustic heroes. Very fine are some of the tender strokes in the picture; for instance, where the poet says Hobbie's "gentle heart was never sae sair as when his ain five bound him on the brae." The mixture of this tenderness with the beer-drinking, loaf-eating, and border-riding atmosphere occasionally makes the poem in its simple truth approach the sublime, approach even to being a type of the world's greatest story of a betrayal. Here and there, too, we find a rude pictorial grandeur, as when Hobbie cries to his treacherous companions—

> "'Awake, awake, my feres five!
> I trow here makes a fu' ill day;
> Yet the worst cloak o' this company,
> I hope shall cross the Waste this day.'"—

It is possible to have a great affection for that cloak of Hobbie's.

The other poem, "Græme and Bewick," is unique in ballad-literature. It reminds one in many ways of the Arthurian story of Balin and Balan. One can hardly be wrong in finding a secondary meaning and an undertone of great pathos in the words of young Bewick—

> "'But I hae nae harness, billie, on my back,
> As weel I see there is on thine'";

and certainly there is something very noble and beautiful in the tale of the tragic fight which, by the foolish rivalry of their fathers over the wine-cups as to which of their sons was the better, was induced between two lads who were sworn brothers-in-arms. More than once, too, there are gleams of exquisite poetry, like that which is wildly dashed over the dark and mournful conclusion by young Bewick's last chivalrous cry—

> "'Gae dig a grave, baith wide and deep,
> And a grave to hald baith him and me;
> *But lay Christie Græme on the sunny side,*
> *For I'm sure he wan the victorie.*'"

A good contrast with these two poems is "Kinmont Willie," the versification of which is superb in its rough vigour; indeed, as a blood-stirring poem, it ranks far higher in every way than the Scottish version of the "Battle of Otterbourne." Of the English counterparts of this latter, Sir Philip Sidney's famous words may well be true: "I never heard the old song of Percie and Douglas that I found not my heart moved

more than with the sound of a trumpet; and yet it is sung but by some blind crowder, with no rougher voice than rude style." But we were sorely tempted to relegate the somewhat jingling and tinkling Scottish ballad to an appendix, for fear that it might blur the effect of such gloriously strong poems as "Kinmont Willie," in whose music we hear the gallop of horses, the sound of trumpets, and the roar of mountain torrents. The blood must indeed be cold that does not leap at that sudden blast of

"*Wha dare meddle with me?*"

The remaining poems must speak for themselves, and they are quite capable of doing so, even though, like "Barthram's Dirge," they are but fragments, left like some broken and moss-grown stone amidst the heather, with many words obliterated from their inscriptions—

"They shot him dead at the Ninestone Rig,
Beside the Headless Cross,
And they left him lying in his blood
Upon the moor and moss.
* * * * * * *
They dug his grave but a bare foot deep,
By the edge of the Ninestone Burn,
And they covered him [o'er with the heather-flower],
The moss and the [Lady] fern."

We draw near to the very soul of romance when we look at these old boulders and stones of poetry, and realise that the words in the above brackets are only conjectural, and that the rest has flown

upon the wind or filtered through the bracken with the rains and gone down the mountain torrents to the sea. Here, if anywhere, we draw near, surely, to the Eternal Spirit of poetry, wherein all our poems are lost.

ALFRED NOYES.

MINSTRELSY OF THE SCOTTISH BORDER

SIR PATRICK SPENS

The King sits in Dunfermline town,
Drinking the blude-red wine;
"O whare will I get gude sailor
To sail this ship of mine?"—

Up and spake an eldern knight,
Sat at the King's right knee,—
"Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor,
That ever sailed the sea."—

Our King has written a braid letter,
And seal'd it with his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens,
Was walking on the strand.

"To Noroway, to Noroway,
To Noroway o'er the faem;
The King's daughter of Noroway,
'Tis thou maun bring her hame."

The first word that Sir Patrick read,
Sae loud loud laughed he;
The neist word that Sir Patrick read,
The tear blinded his ee.

"O wha is this has done this deed,
And tauld the King o' me,
To send us out, at this time of the year,
To sail upon the sea?

"Be it wind, be it weet, be it hail, be it sleet,
Our ship must sail the faem;
The King's daughter of Noroway,
'Tis we must fetch her hame."

They hoysed their sails on Monenday morn,
Wi' a' the speed they may;
They hae landed in Noroway,
Upon a Wodensday.

They hadna been a week, a week,
In Noroway, but twae,
When that the lords o' Noroway
Began aloud to say,—

"Ye Scottishmen spend a' our King's gowd,
And a' our Queenis fee."—
"Ye lie, ye lie, ye liars loud!
Fu' loud I hear ye lie;

"For I brought as much white monie,
As gane my men and me,

And I brought a half-fou of gude red gowd,
Out o'er the sea wi' me.

"Make ready, make ready, my merrymen a'!
Our gude ship sails the morn."—
"Now, ever alake, my master dear,
I fear a deadly storm!

"Late, late, yestreen I saw the new moon
Wi' the auld moon in her arm;
And I fear, I fear, my dear master
That we will come to harm."

They hadna sail'd a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
When the lift grew dark, and the wind blew loud,
And gurly grew the sea.

The ankers brak, and the top-masts lap,
It was sic a deadly storm;
And the waves cam o'er the broken ship,
Till a' her sides were torn.

"O where will I get a gude sailor,
To take my helm in hand,
Till I get up to the tall top-mast,
To see if I can spy land?"—

"O here am I, a sailor gude,
To take the helm in hand,
Till you go up to the tall top-mast;
But I fear you'll ne'er spy land."—

He hadna gane a step, a step.
A step but barely ane,
When a bout flew out of our goodly ship,
And the salt sea it came in.

"Gae, fetch a web o' the silken claith,
Another o' the twine,
And wap them into our ship's side,
And let nae the sea come in."—

They fetch'd a web o' the silken claith,
Another o' the twine,
And they wapp'd them round that gude ship's side.
But still the sea came in.

O laith, laith, were our gude Scots lords
To weet their cork-heel'd shoon!
But lang or a' the play was play'd
They wat their hats aboon.

And mony was the feather bed,
That flatter'd on the faem;
And mony was the gude lord's son
That never mair cam hame.

The ladyes wrang their fingers white,
The maidens tore their hair,
A' for the sake of their true loves;
For them they'll see nae mair.

O lang, lang, may the ladyes sit,
Wi' their fans into their hand,

SIR PATRICK SPENS

Before they see Sir Patrick Spens
  Come sailing to the strand!

And lang, lang, may the maidens sit,
  With their gowd kaims in their hair,
A' waiting for their ain dear loves!
  For them they'll see nae mair.

Half ower, half ower to Aberdoux,
  'Tis fifty fathom deep.
And there lies gude Sir Patrick Spens,
  Wi' the Scots lords at his feet.

THE WIFE OF USHER'S WELL

A Fragment

There lived a wife at Usher's Well,
And a wealthy wife was she,
She had three stout and stalwart sons,
And sent them o'er the sea.

They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely ane,
When word came to the carline wife
That her three sons were gane.

They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely three,
When word came to the carline wife,
That her sons she'd never see.

"I wish the wind may never cease,[1]
Nor fishes in the flood,
Till my three sons come hame to me,
In earthly flesh and blood!"—

[1] The sense of this stanza is obscure, owing, probably, to corruption by reciters.

It fell about the Martinmas,
When nights are lang and mirk,
The carline wife's three sons came hame,
And their hats were o' the birk.

It neither grew in syke nor ditch,
Nor yet in ony sheugh;
But at the gates o' Paradise,
That birk grew fair eneugh.

* * * * *

"Blow up the fire, my maidens!
Bring water from the well!
For a' my house shall feast this night,
Since my three sons are well."—

And she has made to them a bed,
She's made it large and wide;
And she's ta'en her mantle her about,
Sat down at the bed-side.

* * * * *

Up then crew the red red cock,
And up and crew the grey;
The eldest to the youngest said,
"'Tis time we were away."—

The cock he hadna craw'd but once,
And clapp'd his wings at a',
Whan the youngest to the eldest said,
"Brother, we must awa.—

"The cock doth craw, the day doth daw,
The channerin' worm doth chide;
Gin we be mist out o' our place
A sair pain we maun bide;

"Fare ye weel, my mother dear!
Fareweel to barn and byre!
And fare ye weel, the bonny lass,
That kindles my mother's fire."

* * * * *

CLERK SAUNDERS

Clerk Saunders and May Margaret
Walked ower yon garden green;
And sad and heavy was the love
That fell thir twa between.

"A bed, a bed," Clerk Saunders said,
"A bed for you and me!"
"Fye na, fye na," said May Margaret,
"Till anes we married be;

"For in may come my seven bauld brothers,
Wi' torches burning bright;
They'll say—'We hae but ae sister,
And behold she's wi' a knight!'"—

"Then take the sword from my scabbard,
And slowly lift the pin;
And you may swear, and safe your aith,
Ye never let Clerk Saunders in.

"And take a napkin in your hand,
And tie up baith your bonny een;
And you may swear, and safe your aith,
Ye saw me na since late yestreen."—

It was about the midnight hour,
When they asleep were laid,
When in and came her seven brothers,
Wi' torches burning red.

When in and came her seven brothers,
Wi' torches burning bright;
They said, "We hae but ae sister,
And behold her lying with a knight!"

Then out and spake the first o' them,
"I bear the sword shall gar him die!"
And out and spake the second o' them,
"His father has nae mair than he!"

And out and spake the third o' them,
"I wot that they are lovers dear!"
And out and spake the fourth o' them,
"They hae been in love this mony a year!"

Then out and spake the fifth o' them,
"It were great sin true love to twain!"
And out and spake the sixth of them,
"It were shame to slay a sleeping man!"

Then up and gat the seventh o' them,
And never a word spake he;
But he has striped[1] his bright brown brand
Out through Clerk Saunders' fair bodye.

[1] *Striped*—thrust.

CLERK SAUNDERS

Clerk Saunders he started, and Margaret she
turn'd
Into his arms as asleep she lay;
And sad and silent was the night
That was atween thir twae.

And they lay still and sleeped sound,
Until the day began to daw;
And kindly to him she did say,
"It is time, true love, you were awa."

But he lay still, and sleeped sound,
Albeit the sun began to sheen;
She looked atween her and the wa',
And dull and drowsie were his een.

Then in and came her father dear,
Said: "Let a' your mourning be:
I'll carry the dead corpse to the clay,
And I'll come back and comfort thee."—

"Comfort weel your seven sons,
For comforted will I never be;
I ween 'twas neither knave nor loon
Was in the bower last night wi' me."

The clinking bell gaed through the town,
To carry the dead corse to the clay;
And Clerk Saunders stood at May Margaret's
window
I wot, an hour before the day.

"Are ye sleeping, Margaret?" he says,
"Or are ye waking presentlie?
Give me my faith and troth again,
I wot, true love, I gied to thee."—

"Your faith and troth ye sall never get,
Nor our true love sall never twin,
Until ye come within my bower
And kiss me cheik and chin."—

"My mouth it is full cold, Margaret,
It has the smell, now, of the ground:
And if I kiss thy comely mouth,
Thy days of life will not be lang.

"O, cocks are crowing a merry midnight,
I wot the wild fowls are boding day;
Give me my faith and troth again,
And let me fare me on my way."—

"Thy faith and troth thou sall na get,
And our true love shall never twin,
Until ye tell what comes of women,
I wot, who die in strong traivelling?"

"Their beds are made in the heavens high,
Down at the foot of our good Lord's knee,
Weel set about wi' gillyflowers;
I wot sweet company for to see.

"O, cocks are crowing a merry midnight,
I wot the wild fowl are boding day;

The psalms of heaven will soon be sung,
And I, ere now, will be miss'd away."—

Then she has ta'en a crystal wand,
And she has stroken her troth thereon;
She has given it him out at the shot-window,
Wi' mony a sad sigh, and heavy groan.

"I thank ye, Marg'ret; I thank ye, Marg'ret;
And aye I thank ye heartilie;
Gin ever the dead come for the quick,
Be sure, Marg'ret, I'll come for thee."—

It's hosen and shoon, and gown alone,
She climb'd the wall, and follow'd him,
Until she came to the green forest,
And there she lost the sight o' him.

"Is there ony room at your head, Saunders?
Is there ony room at your feet?
Or ony room at your side, Saunders,
Where fain, fain, I wad sleep?"—

"There's nae room at my head, Marg'ret,
There's nae room at my feet;
My bed it is full lowly now:
Amang the hungry worms I sleep.

"Cauld mould is my covering now,
But and my winding-sheet;
The dew it falls nae sooner down,
Than my resting-place is weet.

"But plait a wand o' bonny birk,
And lay it on my breast;
And shed a tear upon my grave,
And wish my saul gude rest.

"And fair Marg'ret, and rare Marg'ret,
And Marg'ret o' veritie,
Gin e'er ye love another man,
Ne'er love him as ye did me."—

Then up and crew the milk-white cock,
And up and crew the grey;
Her lover vanish'd in the air,
And she gaed weeping away.

THE TWA CORBIES

As I was walking all alane,
I heard twa corbies making a mane;
The tane unto the t'other say,
"Where sall we gan and dine to-day?"—

"In behint yon auld fail[1] dyke,
I wot there lies a new-slain knight;
And naebody kens that he lies there,
But his hawk, his hound, and lady fair.

"His hound is to the hunting gane,
His hawk, to fetch the wild-fowl hame,
His lady's ta'en another mate,
Sa we may mak our dinner sweet.

"Ye'll sit on his white hause-bane,
And I'll pick out his bonny blue een:
Wi' ae lock o' his gowden hair,
We'll theek our nest when it grows bare.

"Mony a one for him makes mane,
But nane sall ken where he is gane:
O'er his white banes, when they are bare,
The wind sall blaw for evermair."—

[1] *Fail*—turf.

BARTHRAM'S DIRGE

They shot him dead at the Ninestone Rig,
Beside the Headless Cross,
And they left him lying in his blood,
Upon the moor and moss.

* * * * *

They made a bier of the broken bough,
The sauch and the aspin grey,
And they bore him to the Lady Chapel,
And waked him there all day.

A lady came to that lonely bower,
And threw her robes aside,
She tore her ling [long] yellow hair,
And knelt at Barthram's side.

She bathed him in the Lady-Well
His wounds so deep and sair,
And she plaited a garland for his breast,
And a garland for his hair.

They rowed him in a lily-sheet,
And bare him to his earth,

"And will you be so kind, fair May,
As come out and point my way?"—

See p. 19.

[And the Grey Friars sung the dead man's mass,
As they pass'd the Chapel Garth.]

They buried him at [the mirk] midnight,
[When the dew fell cold and still,
When the aspin grey forgot to play,
And the mist clung to the hill.]

They dug his grave but a bare foot deep,
By the edge of the Ninestone Burn,
And they covered him [o'er with the heather-flower],
The moss and the [Lady] fern.

A Grey Friar staid upon the grave,
And sang till the morning tide,
And a friar shall sing for Barthram's soul,
While the Headless Cross shall bide.

THE ORIGINAL BALLAD OF THE BROOM OF COWDENKNOWS

O THE broom, and the bonny bonny broom,
And the broom of the Cowdenknows!
And aye sae sweet as the lassie sang,
I' the bought, milking the ewes.

The hills were high on ilka side,
An' the bought i' the lirk[1] o' the hill,
And aye, as she sang, her voice it rang,
Out o'er the head o' yon hill.

There was a troop o' gentlemen
Came riding merrilie by,
And one of them has rode out o' the way,
To the bought to the bonny may.

"Weel may ye save an' see, bonny lass,
An' weel may ye save an' see."—
"An' sae wi' you, ye weel-bred knight,
And what's your will wi' me?"

"The night is misty and mirk, fair may,
And I have ridden astray,

[1] *Lirk*—hollow.

And will you be so kind, fair may,
As come out and point my way?"—

"Ride out, ride out, ye ramp rider!
Your steed's baith stout and strong;
For out of the bought I dare na come,
For fear 'at ye do me wrang."

"O winna ye pity me, bonny lass,
O winna ye pity me?
An' widna ye pity my poor steed,
Stands trembling at yon tree?"

"I wadna pity your poor steed
Though it were tied to a thorn;
For if ye wad gain my love the night,
Ye wad slight me ere the morn.

"For I ken you by your weel-busket hat,
And your merrie twinkling ee,
That ye're the Laird o' the Oakland hills,
An' ye may weel seem for to be."—

"But I am not the Laird o' the Oakland hills,
Ye're far mista'en o' me;
But I'm ane o' the men about his house,
An' right aft in his companie."

He's ta'en her by the middle jimp,
And by the grass-green sleeve;
He's lifted her over the fauld-dyke,
And speer'd at her sma' leave.

O he's ta'en out a purse o' gowd,
And streek'd her yellow hair,
"Now, take ye that, my bonny may,
Of me till you hear mair."—

O he's leapt on his berry-brown steed,
An' soon he's o'erta'en his men;
And ane and a' cried out to him,
"O master, ye've tarry'd lang!"—

"O I hae been east, and I hae been west,
An' I hae been far o'er the knowes,
But the bonniest lass that ever I saw
Is i' the bought, milking the ewes."—

She set the cog[1] upon her head,
An' she's gane singing hame—
"O where hae ye been, my ae daughter?
Ye hae na been your lane."—

"O naebody was wi me, father,
O naebody has been wi' me;
The night is misty and mirk, father,
Ye may gang to the door and see.

"But wae be to your ewe-herd, father,
And an ill deed may he dee;
He bug[2] the bought at the back o' the knowe
And a tod[3] has frighted me.

[1] *Cog*—milking-pail. [2] *Bug*—built. [3] *Tod*—fox.

"There came a tod to the bought door,
The like I never saw;
And ere he had ta'en the lamb he did,
I had lourd[1] he had ta'en them a'."—

O whan fifteen weeks was come and gane,
Fifteen weeks and three,
That lassie began to look thin and pale,
An' to long for his merry twinkling ee.

It fell on a day, on a het simmer day,
She was ca'ing out her father's kye,
Bye came a troop o' gentlemen,
A' merrilie riding bye.

"Weel may ye save an' see, bonny may,
Weel may ye save and see!
Weel I wat, ye be a very bonny may,
But whae's aught that babe ye are wi'?"—

Never a word could that lassie say,
For never a ane could she blame,
An' never a word could the lassie say,
But "I have a gudeman at hame."—

"Ye lied, ye lied, my very bonny may,
Sae loud as I hear you lie;
For dinna ye mind that misty night
I was i' the bought wi' thee?

[1] *Lourd*—liefer.

"I ken you by your middle sae jimp,
An' your merry twinkling ee,
That ye're the bonny lass i' the Cowdenknow,
An' ye may weel seem for to be."—

Then he's leapt off his berry-brown steed,
An' he's set that fair may on—
"Ca' out your kye, gude father, yoursell,
For she's never ca' them out again.

"I am the Laird of the Oakland hills,
I hae thirty plows and three;
An' I hae gotten the bonniest lass
That's in a' the south countrie."

THE FLOWERS OF THE FOREST

A Lament for Flodden

I've heard them lilting,[1] at the ewe-milking,
Lasses a' lilting, before dawn of day;
But now they are moaning on ilka green loaning;
The flowers of the forest are a' wede awae.

At bughts, in the morning, nae blythe lads are scorning;
Lasses are lonely, and dowie, and wae;
Nae daffing, nae gabbing, but sighing and sabbing;
Ilk ane lifts her leglin, and hies her awae.

In har'st, at the shearing, nae youths now are jeering;
Bandsters are runkled, and lyart or grey;
At fair, or at preaching, nae wooing, nae fleeching;
The flowers of the forest are a' wede awae.

[1] The following explanation of provincial terms may be found useful:—

Lilting — singing cheerfully. *Loaning* — a broad lane. *Wede awae* — weeded out. *Scorning* — rallying. *Dowie* — dreary. *Daffing and gabbing*—joking and chatting. *Leglin* —milk-pail. *Har'st* — harvest. *Shearing* — reaping. *Bandsters* — sheaf-binders. *Runkled*—wrinkled. *Lyart* — inclining to grey. *Fleeching*—coaxing. *Gloaming*—twilight.

At e'en, in the gloaming, nae younkers are roaming
Bout stacks with the lasses at bogle to play;
But ilk maid sits dreary, lamenting her deary—
The flowers of the forest are weded awae.

Dool and wae for the order, sent our lads to the Border!
The English, for ance, by guile wan the day:
The flowers of the forest, that fought aye the foremost,
The prime of our land, are cauld in the clay.

We'll hear nae mair lilting, at the ewe-milking;
Women and bairns are heartless and wae:
Sighing and moaning on ilka green loaning,
The flowers of the forest are a' wede awae.

THE LAIRD OF MUIRHEAD

Slain "sub vexillo Regis,"—*in the Field of Flodden*

* * * * * *

Afore the King in order stude
The stout Laird of Muirhead,
Wi' that same twa-hand muckle sword
That Bartram fell'd stark dead.

He sware he wadna lose his right
To fight in ilka field;
Nor budge him from his liege's sight
Till his last gasp should yield.

Twa hunder mair, of his ain name,
Frae Torwood and the Clyde,
Sware they would never gang to hame,
But a' die by his syde.

And wondrous weel they kept their troth:
This sturdy royal band
Rush'd down the brae, wi' sic a pith,
That nane could them withstand.

Mony a bloody blow they dealt,
The like was never seen;
And hadna that braw leader fall'n,
They ne'er had slain the King.

HOBBIE NOBLE

Foul fa' the breast first Treason bred in!
That Liddesdale may safely say;
For in it there was baith meat and drink,
And corn unto our geldings gay.

And we were a' stout-hearted men,
As England she might often say:
But now we may turn our backs and flee.
Since brave Noble is sold away.

Now Hobbie was an English man,
And born into Bewcastle dale;
But his misdeeds they were so great,
They banish'd him to Liddesdale.

At Kershope foot the tryste was set,
Kershope of the lilye lee;
And there was traitour Sim o' the Mains,
And with him a private companie.

Then Hobbie has graithed[1] his body fair,
Baith wi' the iron and wi' the steel;
And he has ta'en out his fringed grey,
And there, brave Hobbie, he rade him weel.

[1] *Graithed*—clad.

Then Hobbie is down the water gane,
E'en as fast as he could hie;
Tho' a' should hae bursten and broken their hearts,
Frae that riding-tryst he wad na be.

"Well be ye met, my feres[1] five!
And now, what is your will wi' me?"—
Then they cried wi' a', ae consent,
"Thou'rt welcome here, brave Noble, to me.

"Wilt thou with us into England ride,
And thy safe warrand we will be?
If we get a horse worth a hundred pound,
Upon his back thou sune sall be."—

"I dare not by day into England ride;
The Land-Sergeant has me at feid:
And I know not what evil may betide,
For Peter of Whitfield, his brother, is dead.

"And Anton Shiel he loves not me,
For I gat twa drifts o' his sheep;
The great Earl of Whitfield loves me not,
For nae gear frae me he e'er could keep.

"But will ye stay till the day gae down,
Until the night come o'er the grund,
And I'll be a guide worth ony twa
That may in Liddesdale be found?

[1] *Feres*—companions.

"Though the night be black as pick and tar,
I'll guide ye o'er yon hill sae hie;
And bring ye a' in safety back,
If ye'll be true and follow me."—

He has guided them o'er moss and muir,
O'er hill and hope, and mony a down;
Until they came to the Foulbogshiel,
And there, brave Noble, he lighted down.

But word is gane to the Land-Sergeant,
In Askerton where that he lay—
"The deer, that ye hae hunted sae lang,
Is seen into the Waste this day."—

"The Hobbie Noble is that deer!
I wat he carries the style fu' hie;
Aft has he driven our bluidhounds back,
And set ourselves at little lee.

"Gar warn the bows of Hartlie-burn,
See they sharp their arrows on the wa'!
Warn Willeva and Speir Edom,
And see the morn they meet me a'.

"Gar meet me on the Rodric-haugh,
And see it be by break o' day;
And we will on to Conscouthart-green,
For there, I think, we'll get our prey."—

Then Hobbie Noble has dreimit a dreim,
In the Foulbogshiel where that he lay;

He dreimit his horse was aneath him shot,
And he himself got hard away.

The cocks 'goud craw, the day 'goud daw,
And I wot sae even fell down the rain;
Had Hobbie na wakened at that time,
In the Foulbogshiel he had been ta'en or slain.

"Awake, awake, my feres five!
I trow here makes a fu' ill day;
Yet the worst cloak o' this company,
I hope shall cross the Waste this day."—

Now Hobbie thought the gates were clear;
But, ever alas! it was na sae:
They were beset by cruel men and keen,
That away brave Hobbie might na gae.

"Yet follow me, my feres five,
And see ye keep of me gude ray:
And the worst cloak o' this company
Even yet may cross the Waste this day."—

But the Land-Sergeant's men cam Hobbie before,
The traitor Sim cam Hobbie behin',
So had Noble been wight as Wallace was,
Away, alas! he might na win.

Then Hobbie had but a laddie's sword:
But he did mair than a laddie's deed;
For that sword had clear'd Conscouthart-green,
Had it not broke o'er Jerswigham's head.

Then they hae ta'en brave Hobbie Noble,
  Wi's ain bowstring they band him sae;
But his gentle heart was never sae sair,
  When his ain five bound him on the brae.

They hae ta'en him on for west Carlisle;
  They ask'd him, if he kend the way?
Though much he thought, yet little he said:
  He knew the gate as weel as they.

They hae ta'en him up the Ricker-gate;[1]
  The wives they cast their windows wide;
And every wife to another can say,
  "That's the man loosed Jock o' the Side!"—

"Fy on ye, women! why ca' ye me man?
  For it's nae man that I'm used like;
I am but like a forfoughen[2] hound,
  Has been fighting in a dirty syke."[3]

They hae had him up through Carlisle town,
  And set him by the chimney fire;
They gave brave Noble a loaf to eat,
  And that was little his desire.

They gave him a wheaten loaf to eat,
  And after that a can of beer;
And they a' cried, with one consent,
  "Eat, brave Noble, and make gude cheir.

[1] *Vide* Appendix for the ballad of "Jock o' the Side."
[2] *Forfoughen*—quite fatigued. [3] *Syke*—ditch.

"Confess my lord's horse, Hobbie," they said,
"And to-morrow in Carlisle thou 's na dee."—
"How can I confess them," Hobbie says,
"When I never saw them with my ee?"—

Then Hobbie has sworn a fu' great aith,
By the day that he was gotten and born,
He never had onything o' my lord's,
That either eat him grass or corn.

"Now fare thee weel, sweet Mangerton!
For I think again I'll ne'er thee see:
I wad hae betray'd nae lad alive,
For a' the gowd o' Christentie.

"And fare thee weel, sweet Liddesdale!
Baith the hie land and the law;
Keep ye weel frae the traitor Mains!
For gowd and gear he'll sell ye a'.

"Yet wad I rather be ca'd Hobbie Noble,
In Carlisle, where he suffers for his fau't,
Than I'd be ca'd the traitor Mains,
That eats and drinks o' the meal and maut."

GRÆME AND BEWICK

Gude Lord Græme is to Carlisle gane;
Sir Robert Bewick there met he;
And arm in arm to the wine they did go,
And they drank till they were baith merrie.

Gude Lord Græme has taken the cup,
"Sir Robert Bewick, and here's to thee!
And here's to our twae sons at hame!
For they like us best in our ain countrie."—

"O were your son a lad like mine,
And learn'd some books that he could read,
They might hae been twae brethren bauld,
And they might hae bragged the Border side.

"Ye sent him to the schools, and he wadna learn;
Ye bought him books, and he wadna read."—
"But my blessing shall he never earn,
Till I see how his arm can defend his head."—

Gude Lord Græme has a reckoning call'd,
A reckoning then called he;
And he paid a crown, and it went roun';
It was all for the gude wine and free.

And he has to the stable gane,
Where there stude thirty steeds and three:
He's ta'en his ain horse amang them a',
And hame he rade sae manfullie.

"Welcome, my auld father!" said Christie Græme,
"But where sae lang frae hame were ye?"—
"It's I hae been at Carlisle town,
And a baffled man by thee.

"I hae been at Carlisle town,
Where Sir Robert Bewick he met me;
He says ye're a lad, and ye are but bad,
And billie to his son ye canna be.

"I sent ye to the schools, and ye wadna learn;
I bought ye books, and ye wadna read;
Therefore my blessing ye shall never earn,
Till I see with Bewick thou save thy head."—

"Now, God forbid, my auld father,
That ever sic a thing suld be!
Billie Bewick was my master, and I was his scholar,
And aye sae weel as he learned me."—

"O hald thy tongue, thou limmer loon,
And of thy talking let me be!
If thou does na end me this quarrel soon,
There is my glove, I'll fight wi' thee."—

Then Christie Græme he stooped low
Unto the ground, you shall understand;—

"O father, put on your glove again,
The wind has blown it from your hand?"—

"What's that thou says, thou limmer loon?
How dares thou stand to speak to me?
If thou do not end this quarrel soon,
There's my right hand, thou shalt fight with me."—

Then Christie Græme's to his chamber gane,
To consider weel what then should be;
Whether he should fight with his auld father,
Or with his billie Bewick, he.

"If I suld kill my billie dear,
God's blessing I shall never win;
But if I strike at my auld father,
I think 'twald be a mortal sin.

"But if I kill my billie dear,
It is God's will, so let it be;
But I make a vow, ere I gang frae hame,
That I shall be the next man's die."—

Then he's put on's back a gude auld jack,
And on his head a cap of steel,
And sword and buckler by his side;
O gin he did not become them weel!

We'll leave off talking of Christie Græme,
And talk of him again belive;[1]

[1] *Belive*—by and by.

And we will talk of bonny Bewick,
Where he was teaching his scholars five.

When he had taught them well to fence,
And handle swords without any doubt,
He took his sword under his arm,
And he walk'd his father's close about.

He look'd atween him and the sun,
And a' to see what there might be,
Till he spied a man in armour bright,
Was riding that way most hastilie.

"O wha is yon, that came this way,
Sae hastilie that hither came?
I think it be my brother dear!
I think it be young Christie Græme.—

"Ye're welcome here, my billie dear,
And thrice ye're welcome unto me!"—
"But I'm wae to say, I've seen the day
When I am come to fight wi' thee.

"My father's gane to Carlisle town,
Wi' your father Bewick there met he:
He says I'm a lad, and I am but bad,
And a baffled man I trow I be.

"He sent me to schools, and I wadna learn;
He gae me books, and I wadna read;
Sae my father's blessing I'll never earn,
Till he see how my arm can guard my head."—

"O God forbid, my billie dear,
That ever such a thing suld be!
We'll take three men on either side,
And see if we can our fathers agree."—

"O hald thy tongue, now, billie Bewick,
And of thy talking let me be!
But if thou'rt a man, as I'm sure thou art,
Come o'er the dyke, and fight wi' me."—

"But I hae nae harness, billie, on my back.
As weel I see there is on thine."—
"But as little harness as is on thy back,
As little, billie, shall be on mine."—

Then he's thrown aff his coat of mail,
His cap of steel away flung he;
He stuck his spear into the ground,
And he tied his horse unto a tree.

Then Bewick has thrown aff his cloak,
And's psalter-book frae's hand flung he;
He laid his hand upon the dyke,
And ower he lap most manfullie.

O they hae fought for twae lang hours;
When twae long hours were come and gane,
The sweat drapp'd fast frae aff them baith,
But a drap of blude could not be seen.

Till Græme gae Bewick ane ackward[1] stroke,
  Ane ackward stroke strucken sickerlie;
He has hit him under the left breast,
  And dead-wounded to the ground fell he.

"Rise up, rise up, now, billie dear!
  Arise and speak three words to me!—
Whether thou's gotten thy deadly wound,
  Or if God and good leeching may succour thee?"—

"O horse, O horse, now, billie Græme,
  And get thee far from hence with speed;
And get thee out of this country,
  That none may know who has done the deed."—

"O I have slain thee, billie Bewick,
  If this be true thou tellest to me;
But I made a vow, ere I came frae hame,
  That aye the next man I wad be."

He has pitch'd his sword in a moodie-hill,[2]
  And he has leap'd twenty lang feet and three,
And on his ain sword's point he lap,
  And dead upon the ground fell he.

'Twas then came up Sir Robert Bewick,
  And his brave son alive saw he;
"Rise up, rise up, my son," he said,
  "For I think ye hae gotten the victorie."—

[1] *Ackward*—backward. [2] *Moodie-hill*—mole-hill.

"O hald your tongue, my father dear!
Of your prideful talking let me be!
Ye might hae drunken your wine in peace,
And let me and my billie be.

"Gae dig a grave, baith wide and deep,
And a grave to hald baith him and me;
But lay Christie Græme on the sunny side,
For I'm sure he wan the victorie."—

"Alack! a wae!" auld Bewick cried,
"Alack! was I not much to blame?
I'm sure I've lost the liveliest lad
That e'er was born unto my name."—

"Alack! a wae!" quo' gude Lord Græme—
"I'm sure I hae lost the deeper lack!
I durst hae ridden the Border through,
Had Christie Græme been at my back.

"Had I been led through Liddesdale,
And thirty horsemen guarding me,
And Christie Græme been at my back,
Sae soon as he had set me free!

"I've lost my hopes, I've lost my joy,
I've lost the key but and the lock;
I durst hae ridden the world round,
Had Christie Græme been at my back."

THE DOUGLAS TRAGEDY

"Rise up, rise up, now, Lord Douglas," she says,
"And put on your armour so bright;
Let it never be said that a daughter of thine
Was married to a lord under night.

"Rise up, rise up, my seven bold sons,
And put on your armour so bright,
And take better care of your youngest sister,
For your eldest's awa' the last night."—

He's mounted her on a milk-white steed,
And himself on a dapple grey,
With a bugelet horn hung down by his side,
And lightly they rode away.

Lord William lookit o'er his left shoulder,
To see what he could see,
And there he spy'd her seven brethren bold,
Come riding o'er the lee.

"Light down, light down, Lady Marg'ret," he said,
"And hold my steed in your hand,
Until that against your seven brethren bold,
And your father, I make a stand."—

She held his steed in her milk-white hand,
And never shed one tear,
Until that she saw her seven brethren fa',
And her father hard fighting, who loved her so dear.

"O hold your hand, Lord William!" she said,
"For your strokes they are wondrous sair;
True lovers I can get many a ane,
But a father I can never get mair."—

O, she's ta'en out her handkerchief,
It was o' the holland sae fine,
And aye she dighted [1] her father's bloody wounds,
That were redder than the wine.

"O chuse, O chuse, Lady Marg'ret," he said,
"O whether will ye gang or bide?"—
"I'll gang, I'll gang, Lord William," she said,
"For you have left me no other guide."—

He's lifted her on a milk-white steed,
And himself on a dapple grey,
With a bugelet horn hung down by his side,
And slowly they baith rade away.

O they rade on, and on they rade,
And a' by the light of the moon,
Until they came to yon wan water,
And there they lighted down.

[1] *Dighted*—wiped.

They lighted down to tak a drink
  Of the spring that ran sae clear;
And down the stream ran his gude heart's blood,
  And sair she 'gan to fear.

"Hold up, hold up, Lord William," she says,
  "For I fear that you are slain!"—
"'Tis naething but the shadow of my scarlet cloak
  That shines in the water sae plain."—

O they rade on, and on they rade,
  And a' by the light of the moon,
Until they cam to his mother's ha' door,
  And there they lighted down.

"Get up, get up, lady mother," he says,
  "Get up, and let me in!—
Get up, get up, lady mother," he says,
  "For this night my fair lady I've win.

"O mak my bed, lady mother," he says,
  "O mak it braid and deep!
And lay Lady Marg'ret close at my back,
  And the sounder I will sleep."—

Lord William was dead lang ere midnight,
  Lady Marg'ret lang ere day—
And all true lovers that go thegither,
  May they have mair luck than they!

Lord William was buried in St Marie's kirk,
Lady Marg'ret in Marie's quire;
Out o' the lady's grave grew a bonny red rose,
And out o' the knight's a brier.

And they twa met, and they twa plat,
And fain they wad be near;
And a' the warld might ken right weel,
They were twa lovers dear.

But bye and rade the Black Douglas,
And wow but he was rough!
For he pull'd up the bonny brier,
And flang'd in St Mary's Loch.

THE LAMENT OF THE BORDER WIDOW

My love he built me a bonny bower,
And clad it a' wi' lilye flour,
A brawer bower ye ne'er did see
Than my true love he built for me.

There came a man, by middle day,
He spied his sport, and went away;
And brought the King that very night,
Who brake my bower, and slew my knight.

He slew my knight, to me sae dear;
He slew my knight, and poin'd his gear;
My servants all for life did flee,
And left me in extremitie.

I sew'd his sheet, making my mane;
I watch'd the corpse, myself alane;
I watch'd his body, night and day;
No living creature came that way.

I took his body on my back,
And whiles I gaed, and whiles I sat;
I digg'd a grave, and laid him in,
And happ'd him with the sod sae green.

But think na ye my heart was sair,
When I laid the moul on his yellow hair;
O think na ye my heart was wae,
When I turn'd about, awa' to gae?

Nae living man I'll love again,
Since that my lovely knight is slain;
Wi' ae lock of his yellow hair
I'll chain my heart for evermair.

FAIR HELEN

I WISH I were where Helen lies,
Night and day on me she cries:
O that I were where Helen lies,
On fair Kirconnell Lee!

Curst be the heart that thought the thought,
And curst the hand that fired the shot,
When in my arms burd Helen dropt,
And died to succour me!

O think na ye my heart was sair,
When my love dropt down and spak nae mair!
There did she swoon wi' meikle care,
On fair Kirconnell Lee.

As I went down the water-side,
None but my foe to be my guide,
None but my foe to be my guide,
On fair Kirconnell Lee;

I lighted down my sword to draw,
I hacked him in pieces sma',
I hacked him in pieces sma',
For her sake that died for me.

O Helen fair, beyond compare!
I'll make a garland of thy hair,
Shall bind my heart for evermair,
Until the day I die.

O that I were where Helen lies!
Night and day on me she cries;
Out of my bed she bids me rise,
Says, "Haste and come to me!"—

O Helen fair! O Helen chaste!
If I were with thee I were blest,
Where thou lies low, and takes thy rest,
On fair Kirconnell Lee.

I wish my grave were growing green,
A winding-sheet drawn ower my een,
And I in Helen's arms lying,
On fair Kirconnell Lee.

I wish I were where Helen lies!
Night and day on me she cries;
And I am weary of the skies
For her sake that died for me.

FAUSE FOODRAGE

King Easter has courted her for her lands,
  King Wester for her fee,
King Honour for her comely face,
  And for her fair bodie.

They had not been four months married
  As I have heard them tell,
Until the nobles of the land
  Against them did rebel.

And they cast kevils[1] them amang,
  And kevils them between;
And they cast kevils them amang,
  Wha suld gae kill the King.

O, some said yea, and some said nay,
  Their words did not agree;
Till up and got him, Fause Foodrage,
  And swore it suld be he.

When bells were rung, and mass was sung,
  And a' men bound to bed,

[1] *Kevils*—lots.

King Honour and his gay ladye
In a high chamber were laid.

Then up and raise him, Fause Foodrage,
When a' were fast asleep,
And slew the porter in his lodge,
That watch and ward did keep.

O four-and-twenty silver keys
Hang hie upon a pin;
And aye, as ae door he did unlock,
He has fasten'd it him behind.

Then up and raise him, King Honour,
Says—"What means a' this din?
Or what's the matter, Fause Foodrage,
Or wha has loot you in?"—

"O ye my errand weel sall learn
Before that I depart."—
Then drew a knife, baith lang and sharp,
And pierced him to the heart.

Then up and got the Queen hersell,
And fell low down on her knee,
"O spare my life, now, Fause Foodrage!
For I never injured thee.

"O spare my life, now, Fause Foodrage!
Until I lighter be!
And see gin it be lad or lass,
King Honour has left me wi'."—

O they rade on, and on they rade,
And a' by the light of the moon.—

See p. 41.

"O gin it be a lass," he says,
"Weel nursed it sall be;
But gin it be a lad bairn,
He sall be hanged hie.

"I winna spare for his tender age,
Nor yet for his hie hie kin:
But soon as e'er he born is
He sall mount the gallows pin."—

O four-and-twenty valiant knights
Were set the Queen to guard;
And four stood aye at her bour door,
To keep both watch and ward.

But when the time drew near an end
That she suld lighter be,
She cast about to find a wile
To set her body free.

O she has birled these merry young men
With the ale but and the wine,
Until they were a' deadly drunk
As any wild-wood swine.

"O narrow, narrow is this window,
And big, big am I grown!"—
Yet through the might of Our Ladye,
Out at it she is gone.

She wander'd up, she wander'd down,
She wander'd out and in;

And, at last, into the very swine's stythe,
The Queen brought forth a son.

Then they cast kevils them amang,
Which suld gae seek the Queen ;
And the kevil fell upon Wise William,
And he sent his wife for him.

O when she saw Wise William's wife,
The Queen fell on her knee :
" Win up, win up, madam ! " she says :
" What needs this courtesie ? "

" O out o' this I winna rise,
Till a boon ye grant to me ;
To change your lass for this lad bairn,
King Honour left me wi'.

" And ye maun learn my gay goss-hawk
Right weel to breast a steed ;
And I sall learn your turtle-dow [1]
As weel to write and read.

" And ye maun learn my gay goss-hawk
To wield both bow and brand ;
And I sall learn your turtle-dow
To lay gowd [2] wi' her hand.

" At kirk and market when we meet,
We'll dare make nae avowe,

[1] *Dow*—dove. [2] *Lay gowd*—to embroider in gold.

But—'Dame, how does my gay goss-hawk?'
'Madame, how does my dow?'"

When days were gane, and years came on,
Wise William he thought lang;
And he has ta'en King Honour's son
A-hunting for to gang.

It sae fell out, at this hunting,
Upon a simmer's day,
That they came by a fair castell,
Stood on a sunny brae.

"O dinna ye see that bonny castell,
Wi' halls and towers sae fair?
Gin ilka man had back his ain,
Of it you suld be heir."—

"How I suld be heir of that castell,
In sooth, I canna see;
For it belangs to Fause Foodrage,
And he is na kin to me."—

"O gin ye suld kill him, Fause Foodrage,
You would do but what was right;
For I wot he kill'd your father dear,
Or ever ye saw the light.

"And gin ye suld kill him, Fause Foodrage,
There is no man durst you blame;
For he keeps your mother a prisoner,
And she darna take ye hame."—

The boy stared wild like a grey goss-hawk;
Says—"What may a' this mean?"
"My boy, ye are King Honour's son,
And your mother's our lawful Queen."—

"O gin I be King Honour's son,
By Our Ladye I swear,
This night I will that traitor slay,
And relieve my mother dear!"—

He has set his bent bow to his breast,
And leaped the castell wa';
And soon he has seized on Fause Foodrage,
Wha loud for help 'gan ca'.

"O haud your tongue, now, Fause Foodrage,
Frae me ye shanna flee";—
Syne pierced him through the fause, fause heart,
And set his mother free.

And he has awarded Wise William
Wi' the best half of his land;
And sae has he the turtle-dow
Wi' the truth o' his right hand.

THE GAY GOSS-HAWK

"O WALY, waly, my gay goss-hawk,
Gin your feathering be sheen!"—
"And waly, waly, my master dear,
Gin ye look pale and lean!

"O have ye tint, at tournament,
Your sword, or yet your spear?
Or mourn ye for the southern lass,
Whom ye may not win near?"—

"I have not tint, at tournament,
My sword, nor yet my spear;
But sair I mourn for my true love,
Wi' mony a bitter tear.

"But weel's me on ye, my gay goss-hawk,
Ye can baith speak and flee;
Ye sall carry a letter to my love,
Bring an answer back to me."—

"But how sall I your true love find,
Or how suld I her know?
I bear a tongue ne'er wi' her spake,
An eye that ne'er her saw."—

"O weel sall ye my true love ken,
Sae sune as ye her see;
For, of a' the flowers of fair England,
The fairest flower is she.

"The red, that's on my true love's cheek,
Is like blood-drops on the snaw;
The white, that is on her breast bare,
Like the down o' the white sea-maw.

"And even at my love's bour-door
There grows a flowering birk;
And ye maun sit and sing thereon
As she gangs to the kirk.

"And four-and-twenty fair ladyes
Will to the mass repair;
But weel may ye my ladye ken,
The fairest ladye there."

Lord William has written a love-letter,
Put it under his pinion grey;
And he is awa to southern land
As fast as wings can gae.

And even at the ladye's bour
There grew a flowering birk;
And he sat down and sung thereon
As she gaed to the kirk.

And weel he kent that ladye fair
Among her maidens free;
For the flower, that springs in May morning,
Was not sae sweet as she.

He lighted at the ladye's yate,
And sat him on a pin;
And sang fu' sweet the notes o' love.
Till a' was cosh [1] within.

And first he sang a low low note,
And syne he sang a clear;
And aye the o'erword o' the sang
Was—"Your love can no win here."—

"Feast on, feast on, my maidens a',
The wine flows you amang,
While I gang to my shot-window,[2]
And hear yon bonnie bird's sang.

"Sing on, sing on, my bonny bird,
The sang ye sung yestreen;
For weel I ken, by your sweet singing,
Ye are frae my true love sen."

O first he sang a merry sang,
And syne he sang a grave;
And syne he picked his feathers grey,
To her the letter gave.

[1] *Cosh*—quiet. [2] *Shot-window*—a bow-window.

"Have there a letter from Lord William;
He says he's sent ye three;
He canna wait your love langer,
But for your sake he'll die."—

"Gae bid him bake his bridal bread,
And brew his bridal ale;
And I shall meet him at Mary's kirk,
Lang, lang ere it be stale."

The ladye's gane to her chamber,
And a moanfu' woman was she;
As gin she had ta'en a sudden brash,[1]
And were about to die.

"A boon, a boon, my father deir,
A boon I beg of thee!"—
"Ask not that paughty Scottish lord,
For him you ne'er shall see.

"But, for your honest asking else,
Weel granted it shall be."—
"Then, gin I die in southern land,
In Scotland gar bury me.

"And the first kirk that ye come to,
Ye's gar the mass be sung;
And the next kirk that ye come to,
Ye's gar the bells be rung.

[1] *Brash*—sickness.

"And when ye come to St. Mary's kirk,
Ye's tarry there till night."
And so her father pledg'd his word,
And so his promise plight.

She has ta'en her to her bigly bour
As fast as she could fare;
And she has drank a sleepy draught
That she had mix'd wi' care.

And pale, pale grew her rosy cheek,
That was sae bright of blee,[1]
And she seem'd to be as surely dead
As any one could be.

Then spake her cruel step-minnie,
"Tak ye the burning lead,
And drap a drap on her bosome,
To try if she be dead."

They took a drap o' boiling lead,
They drapp'd it on her breast;
"Alas! alas!" her father cried,
"She's dead without the priest."

She neither chatter'd with her teeth,
Nor shiver'd with her chin;
"Alas! alas!" her father cried,
"There is nae breath within."

[1] *Blee*—bloom.

Then up arose her seven brethren,
And hew'd to her a bier;
They hew'd it frae the solid aik,
Laid it o'er wi' silver clear.

Then up and gat her seven sisters,
And sewed to her a kell;[1]
And every steek that they put in
Sewed to a siller bell.

The first Scots kirk that they cam to,
They garr'd the bells be rung;
The next Scots kirk that they cam to,
They garr'd the mass be sung.

But when they cam to St. Mary's kirk,
There stude spearmen all in a raw;
And up and started Lord William,
The chieftane amang them a'.

"Set down, set down the bier," he said,
"Let me look her upon":
But as soon as Lord William touch'd her hand,
Her colour began to come.

She brightened like the lily flower,
Till her pale colour was gone;
With rosy cheek, and ruby lip,
She smiled her love upon.

[1] *Kell*—shroud.

"A morsel of your bread, my lord,
And one glass of your wine;
For I hae fasted these three lang days,
All for your sake and mine."

THE SILLY BLIND HARPER

O HEARD ye na o' the silly blind Harper,
How long he lived in Lochmaben town?
And how he wad gang to fair England,
To steal the Lord Warden's Wanton Brown?

But first he gaed to his gude-wyfe,
Wi' a' the haste that he could thole—
"This wark," quo' he, "will ne'er gae weel
Without a mare that has a foal."—

Quo' she, "Thou hast a gude grey mare,
That can baith lance o'er laigh and hie;
Sae set thee on the grey mare's back,
And leave the foal at hame wi' me."—

So he is up to England gane,
And even as fast as he may drie;
And when he cam to Carlisle gate,
O whae was there but the Warden hie?

"Come into my hall, thou silly blind Harper,
And of thy harping let me hear!"—
"O, by my sooth," quo' the silly blind Harper,
"I wad rather hae stabling for my mare."—

The Warden look'd ower his left shoulder,
And said unto his stable groom—
"Gae take the silly blind Harper's mare,
And tie her beside my Wanton Brown."

Then aye he harped, and aye he carped,[1]
Till a' the lordlings footed the floor;
But an the music was sae sweet,
The groom had nae mind o' the stable door.

And aye he harped, and aye he carped.
Till a' the nobles were fast asleep;
Then quickly he took aff his shoon,
And saftly down the stair did creep.

Syne to the stable door he hied,
Wi' tread as light as light could be;
And when he open'd and gaed in,
There he fand thirty steeds and three.

He took a cowt halter[2] frae his hose,
And o' his purpose he didna fail;
He slipt it ower the Wanton's nose,
And tied it to his grey mare's tail.

He turn'd them loose at the castle gate,
Ower muir and moss and ilka dale;
And she ne'er let the Wanton bait,
But kept him a-galloping hame to her foal.

[1] Sung. [2] *Cowt halter*—colt's halter.

The mare she was right swift o' foot,
  She didna fail to find the way;
For she was at Lochmaben gate
  A lang three hours before the day.

When she came to the Harper's door,
  There she gave mony a nicker and sneer.[1]—
"Rise up," quo' the wife, "thou lazy lass;
  Let in thy master and his mare."—

Then up she rose, put on her clothes,
  And keekit through at the lock-hole—
"O! by my sooth," then cried the lass,
  "Our mare has gotten a braw brown foal!"—

"Come haud thy tongue, thou silly wench!
  The morn's but glancing in your ee."—
"I'll wad my hail fee[2] against a groat,
  He's bigger than e'er our foal will be."—

Now all this while in merry Carlisle
  The Harper harped to hie and law;
And the fiend dought they do[3] but listen him to,
  Until that the day began to daw.

But on the morn at fair daylight,
  When they had ended a' their cheer,
Behold the Wanton Brown was gane,
  And eke the poor blind Harper's mare!

[1] *Nicker and sneer*—neigh and snort.
[2] *Wad my hail fee*—bet my whole wages.
[3] *Fiend dought they do*—nothing could they do.

"Allace! allace!" quo' the cunning auld Harper,
"And ever allace that I cam here;
In Scotland I hae lost a braw cowt foal,
In England they've stown my gude grey mare!"—

"Come! cease thy allacing, thou silly blind Harper,
And again of thy harping let us hear;
And weel payd sall thy cowt-foal be,
And thou sall have a far better mare."—

Then aye he harped, and aye he carped;
Sae sweet were the harpings he let them hear!
He was paid for the foal he had never lost,
And three times ower for the gude GREY MARE.

KINMONT WILLIE

O HAVE ye na heard o' the fause Sakelde?
O have ye na heard o' the keen Lord Scroope?
How they hae ta'en bauld Kinmont Willie,
On Haribee to hang him up?[1]

Had Willie had but twenty men,
But twenty men as stout as he,
Fause Sakelde had never the Kinmont ta'en,
Wi' eight score in his cumpanie.

They band his legs beneath the steed,
They tied his hands behind his back;
They guarded him, fivesome on each side,
And they brought him ower the Liddel-rack.

They led him thro' the Liddel-rack,
And also thro' the Carlisle sands;
They brought him to Carlisle castell,
To be at my Lord Scroope's commands.

"My hands are tied, but my tongue is free,
And whae will dare this deed avow?
Or answer by the Border law?
Or answer to the bauld Buccleuch?"—

[1] Haribee is the place of execution at Carlisle.

"Now sound out, trumpets!" quo' Buccleugh;
"Let's waken Lord Scroope right merrilie!"—

See p. 69.

"Now haud thy tongue, thou rank reiver!
There's never a Scot shall set thee free:
Before ye cross my castle yate,
I trow ye shall take farewell o' me."

"Fear na ye that, my lord," quo' Willie:
"By the faith o' my body, Lord Scroope," he said,
"I never yet lodged in a hostelrie,
But I paid my lawing before I gaed."—

Now word is gane to the bauld Keeper,
In Branksome Ha', where that he lay,
That Lord Scroope has ta'en the Kinmont Willie
Between the hours of night and day.

He has ta'en the table wi' his hand,
He garr'd the red wine spring on hie—
"Now Christ's curse on my head," he said,
"But avenged of Lord Scroope I'll be!

"O is my basnet a widow's curch?[1]
Or my lance a wand of the willow-tree?
Or my arm a ladye's lilye hand,
That an English lord should lightly me!

"And have they ta'en him, Kinmont Willie,
Against the truce of Border tide?
And forgotten that the bauld Buccleuch
Is Keeper here on the Scottish side?

[1] *Curch*—coif.

"And have they e'en ta'en him, Kinmont Willie,
Withouten either dread or fear?
And forgotten that the bauld Buccleuch
Can back a steed, or shake a spear?

"O were there war between the lands,
As well I wot that there is none,
I would slight Carlisle castell high,
Though it were builded of marble stone.

"I would set that castell in a low,[1]
And sloken it with English blood!
There's never a man in Cumberland,
Should ken where Carlisle castell stood.

"But since nae war's between the lands,
And there is peace, and peace should be,
I'll neither harm English lad or lass,
And yet the Kinmont freed shall be!"

He has call'd him forty Marchmen bauld,
I trow they were of his ain name,
Except Sir Gilbert Elliot, call'd
The Laird of Stobs, I mean the same.

He has call'd him forty Marchmen bauld,
Were kinsmen to the bauld Buccleuch;
With spur on heel, and splent on spauld,[2]
And gleuves of green, and feathers blue.

[1] *Low*—flame.
[2] *Splent on spauld*—armour on shoulder.

There were five and five before them a',
Wi' hunting-horns and bugles bright:
And five and five came wi' Buccleuch,
Like warden's men, array'd for fight.

And five and five, like a mason gang,
That carried the ladders lang and hie;
And five and five, like broken men;
And so they reach'd the Woodhouselee.

And as we cross'd the Bateable Land,
When to the English side we held,
The first o' men that we met wi',
Whae sould it be but fause Sakelde?

"Where be ye gaun, ye hunters keen?"
Quo' fause Sakelde; "come tell to me!"
"We go to hunt an English stag,
Has trespass'd on the Scots countrie."

"Where be ye gaun, ye marshal men?"
Quo' fause Sakelde; "come tell me true!"—
"We go to catch a rank reiver,
Has broken faith wi' the bauld Buccleuch."

"Where are ye gaun, ye mason lads,
Wi' a' your ladders, lang and hie?"—
"We gang to herry a corbie's nest,
That wons not far frae Woodhouselee."—

"Where be ye gaun, ye broken men?"
Quo' fause Sakelde; "come tell to me!"—
Now Dickie of Dryhope led that band,
And the nevir a word of lear[1] had he.

"Why trespass ye on the English side?
Row-footed outlaws, stand!" quo' he;
The nevir a word had Dickie to say,
Sae he thrust the lance through his fause bodie.

Then on we held for Carlisle toun,
And at Staneshaw-bank the Eden we cross'd;
The water was great and meikle of spait,
But the nevir a horse nor man we lost.

And when we reach'd the Staneshaw-bank
The wind was rising loud and hie;
And there the Laird garr'd leave our steeds,
For fear that they should stamp and nie.

And when we left the Staneshaw-bank,
The wind began full loud to blaw;
But 'twas wind and weet, and fire and sleet,
When we came beneath the castle wa'.

We crept on knees, and held our breath,
Till we placed the ladders against the wa';
And sae ready was Buccleuch himsell
To mount the first before us a'.

[1] *Lear*—lore.

He has ta'en the watchman by the throat,
He flung him down upon the lead—
"Had there not been peace between our lands,
Upon the other side thou hadst gaed!—

"Now sound out, trumpets!" quo' Buccleuch;
"Let's waken Lord Scroope right merrilie!"—
Then loud the warden's trumpet blew—
O wha dare meddle wi me?

Then speedilie to wark we gaed,
And raised the slogan ane and a',
And cut a hole through a sheet of lead,
And so we wan to the castle ha'.

They thought King James and a' his men
Had won the house wi' bow and spear;
It was but twenty Scots and ten,
That put a thousand in sic a stear![1]

Wi' coulters, and wi' forehammers,
We garr'd the bars bang merrilie,
Until we came to the inner prison,
Where Willie o' Kinmont he did lie.

And when we cam to the lower prison,
Where Willie o' Kinmont he did lie—
"O sleep ye, wake ye, Kinmont Willie,
Upon the morn that thou's to die?"—

[1] *Stear*—stir.

"O I sleep saft,[1] and I wake aft;
It's lang since sleeping was fley'd[2] frae me!
Gie my service back to my wife and bairns,
And a' gude fellows that speir[3] for me."—

Then Red Rowan has hente him up,
The starkest man in Teviotdale—
"Abide, abide now, Red Rowan,
Till of my Lord Scroope I take farewell.

"Farewell, farewell, my gude Lord Scroope!
My gude Lord Scroope, farewell!" he cried—
I'll pay you for my lodging maill,[4]
When first we meet on the Border side."—

Then shoulder high, with shout and cry,
We bore him down the ladder lang;
At every stride Red Rowan made,
I wot the Kinmont's airns play'd clang!

"O mony a time," quo' Kinmont Willie,
"I have ridden horse baith wild and wood;
But a rougher beast than Red Rowan
I ween my legs have ne'er bestrode.

"And mony a time," quo' Kinmont Willie,
"I've prick'd a horse out oure the furs;
But since the day I back'd a steed,
I never wore sic cumbrous spurs!"—

[1] *Saft*—light.
[2] *Fleyed*—frightened.
[3] *Speir*—inquire.
[4] *Maill*—rent.

We scarce had won the Staneshaw-bank
When a' the Carlisle bells were rung,
And a thousand men on horse and foot
Cam wi' the keen Lord Scroope along.

Buccleuch has turn'd to Eden Water,
Even where it flow'd frae bank to brim,
And he has plunged in wi' a' his band,
And safely swam them through the stream.

He turn'd him on the other side,
And at Lord Scroope his glove flung he—
"If ye like na my visit in merry England,
In fair Scotland come visit me!"

All sore astonish'd stood Lord Scroope,
He stood as still as rock of stane;
He scarcely dared to trew his eyes,
When through the water they had gane.

"He is either himsell a devil frae hell,
Or else his mother a witch maun be;
I wadna have ridden that wan water
For a' the gowd in Christentie."

LORD MAXWELL'S GOOD-NIGHT[1]

"Adieu, madame, my mother dear,
But and my sisters three!
Adieu, fair Robert of Orchardstane!
My heart is wae for thee.
Adieu, the lily and the rose,
The primrose fair to see;
Adieu, my ladye, and only joy!
For I may not stay with thee.

"Though I hae slain the Lord Johnstone,
What care I for their feid?
My noble mind their wrath disdains—
He was my father's deid.
Both night and day I labour'd oft
Of him avenged to be;
But now I've got what lang I sought,
And I may not stay with thee.

"Adieu! Drumlanrig, false wert aye,
And Closeburn in a band!
The Laird of Lag, frae my father that fled,
When the Johnston struck aff his hand.

[1] This ballad suggested the famous song in *Childe Harold*, "My Native Land, Good-night."

They were three brethren in a band—
  Joy may they never see!
Their treacherous art, and cowardly heart,
  Has twined my love and me.

"Adieu! Dumfries, my proper place,
  But and Carlaverock fair!
Adieu! my castle of the Thrieve,
  Wi' a' my buildings there:
Adieu! Lochmaben's gate sae fair,
  The Langholm-holm, where birks there be;
Adieu! my ladye, and only joy,
  For, trust me, I may not stay wi' thee.

"Adieu! fair Eskdale up and down,
  Where my puir friends do dwell;
The bangisters[1] will ding them down,
  And will them sair compell.
But I'll avenge their feid mysell,
  When I come o'er the sea;
Adieu! my ladye, and only joy,
  For I may not stay wi' thee."—

"Lord of the land!"—that ladye said,
  "O wad ye go wi' me,
Unto my brother's stately tower,
  Where safest ye may be!
There Hamiltons, and Douglas baith,
  Shall rise to succour thee."—
"Thanks for thy kindness, fair my dame,
  But I may not stay wi' thee."—

[1] *Bangisters*—the prevailing party.

Then he tuik aff a gay gold ring,
Thereat hang signets three;
"Hae, tak thee that, mine ain dear thing,
And still hae mind o' me:
But if thou take another lord,
Ere I come ower the sea—
His life is but a three days' lease,
Though I may not stay wi' thee."—

The wind was fair, the ship was clear,
That good lord went away;
And most part of his friends were there,
To give him a fair convey.
They drank the wine, they didna spair,
Even in that gude lord's sight—
Sae now he's o'er the floods sae grey,
And Lord Maxwell has ta'en his Good-night.

THE BATTLE OF OTTERBOURNE

It fell about the Lammas tide,
When the muir-men win their hay,
The doughty Douglas bound him to ride
Into England, to drive a prey.

He chose the Gordons and the Græmes,
With them the Lindesays, light and gay,
But the Jardines wald not with him ride,
And they rue it to this day.

And he has burned the dales of Tyne,
And part of Bambrough shire;
And three good towers on Reidswire fells,
He left them all on fire.

And he march'd up to Newcastle,
And rode it round about;
"O wha's the lord of this castle,
Or wha's the lady o't?"—

But up spake proud Lord Percy, then,
And O but he spake hie!
"I am the lord of this castle,
My wife's the lady gay."

"If thou'rt the lord of this castle,
Sae weel it pleases me!
For, ere I cross the Border fells,
The tane of us shall die."—

He took a lang spear in his hand,
Shod with the metal free,
And for to meet the Douglas there,
He rode right furiouslie.

But O how pale his lady look'd,
Frae aff the castle wa',
When down before the Scottish spear
She saw proud Percy fa'.

"Had we twa been upon the green,
And never an eye to see,
I would hae had you, flesh and fell;[1]
But your sword sall gae wi' me."—

"But gae ye up to Otterbourne,
And wait there dayis three;
And if I come not ere three dayis end,
A fause knight ca' ye me."

"The Otterbourne's a bonnie burn;
'Tis pleasant there to be;
But there is nought at Otterbourne,
To feed my men and me.

[1] *Fell*—hide. Douglas insinuates that Percy was rescued by his soldiers.

"The deer rins wild on hill and dale,
The birds fly wild from tree to tree;
But there is neither bread nor kale,
To fend my men and me.

"Yet I will stay at Otterbourne,
Where you shall welcome be;
And, if ye come not at three dayis end,
A fause lord I'll ca' thee."—

"Thither will I come," proud Percy said,
"By the might of Our Ladye!"
"There will I bide thee," said the Douglas,
"My troth I plight to thee."

They lighted high on Otterbourne,
Upon the bent sae brown;
They lighted high on Otterbourne,
And threw their pallions down.

And he that had a bonnie boy,
Sent out his horse to grass;
And he that had not a bonnie boy,
His ain servant he was.

But up then spake a little page,
Before the peep of dawn—
"O waken ye, waken ye, my good lord
For Percy's hard at hand."—

"Ye lie, ye lie, ye liar loud!
Sae loud I hear ye lie:

For Percy had not men yestreen
To dight my men and me.

"But I have dream'd a dreary dream
Beyond the Isle of Sky;
I saw a dead man win a fight,
And I think that man was I."

He belted on his guid braid sword,
And to the field he ran;
But he forgot the helmet good
That should have kept his brain.

When Percy wi' the Douglas met,
I wat he was fu' fain!
They swakked their swords, till sair they swat,
And the blood ran down like rain.

But Percy with his good broad sword,
That could so sharply wound,
Has wounded Douglas on the brow,
Till he fell to the ground.

Then he call'd on his little foot-page,
And said—"Run speedilie,
And fetch my ain dear sister's son,
Sir Hugh Montgomery.

"My nephew good," the Douglas said,
"What recks the death of ane!
Last night I dreamed a dreary dream,
And I ken the day's thy ain.

"My wound is deep; I fain would sleep;
Take thou the vanguard of the three,
And hide me by the braken bush,
That grows on yonder lilye lee.

"O bury me by the braken bush,
Beneath the blooming brier,
Let never living mortal ken
That ere a kindly Scot lies here."

He lifted up that noble lord,
Wi' the saut tear in his ee;
He hid him in the braken bush,
That his merrie-men might not see.

The moon was clear, the day drew near,
The spears in flinders flew,
But mony a gallant Englishman
Ere day the Scotsmen slew.

The Gordons good, in English blood,
They steep'd their hose and shoon;
The Lindesays flew like fire about,
Till all the fray was done.

The Percy and Montgomery met,
That either of other were fain;
They swapped swords, and they twa swat,
And aye the blood ran down between.

"Now yield thee, yield thee, Percy," he said,
"Or else I vow I'll lay thee low!"

"To whom must I yield," quoth Earl Percy,
"Now that I see it must be so?"—

"Thou shalt not yield to lord nor loun,
Nor yet shalt thou yield to me;
But yield thee to the braken bush,
That grows upon yon lilye lee!"—

"I will not yield to a braken bush,
Nor yet will I yield to a brier;
But I would yield to Earl Douglas,
Or Sir Hugh the Montgomery, if he were here."

As soon as he knew it was Sir Hugh,
He struck his sword's point in the gronde;
The Montgomery was a courteous knight,
And quickly took him by the honde.

This deed was done at Otterbourne
About the breaking of the day;
Earl Douglas was buried at the braken bush,
And the Percy led captive away.

* * * * *

The Gordons good, in English blood
They steep'd their hose and shoon.—

See p. 79.

O TELL ME HOW TO WOO THEE

If doughty deeds my ladye please,
Right soon I'll mount my steed;
And strong his arm, and fast his seat,
That bears frae me the meed.
I'll wear thy colours in my cap,
Thy picture in my heart;
And he that bends not to thine eye
Shall rue it to his smart.
Then tell me how to woo thee, love;
O tell me how to woo thee!
For thy dear sake, nae care I'll take,
Tho' ne'er another trow me.

If gay attire delight thine eye,
I'll dight me in array;
I'll tend thy chamber door all night,
And squire thee all the day.
If sweetest sounds can win thy ear,
These sounds I'll strive to catch;
Thy voice I'll steal to woo thysell,
That voice that nane can match.
Then tell me how to woo thee, love;
O tell me how to woo thee!
For thy dear sake, nae care I'll take,
Tho' ne'er another trow me.

But if fond love thy heart can gain,
I never broke a vow;
Nae maiden lays her skaith to me,
I never loved but you.
For you alone I ride the ring,
For you I wear the blue;
For you alone I strive to sing,
O tell me how to woo!
O tell me how to woo thee, love;
O tell me how to woo thee!
For thy dear sake, nae care I'll take,
Tho' ne'er another trow me.

THE QUEEN'S MARIE

Marie Hamilton's to the kirk gane,
Wi' ribbons in her hair;
The King thought mair o' Marie Hamilton
Than ony that were there.

Marie Hamilton's to the kirk gane,
Wi' ribbons on her breast;
The King thought mair o' Marie Hamilton
Than he listen'd to the priest.

Marie Hamilton's to the kirk gane,
Wi' gloves upon her hands;
The King thought mair o' Marie Hamilton
Than the Queen and a' her lands.

She hadna been about the King's court
A month, but barely one,
Till she was beloved by a' the King's court,
And the King the only man.

She hadna been about the King's court
A month, but barely three,
Till frae the King's court Marie Hamilton,
Marie Hamilton durstna be.

The King is to the Abbey gane,
To pu' the Abbey tree,
To scale the babe frae Marie's heart;
But the thing it wadna be.

O she has row'd it in her apron,
And set it on the sea—
"Gae sink ye, or swim ye, bonny babe,
Ye'se get nae mair o' me."—

Word is to the kitchen gane,
And word is to the ha',
And word is to the noble room,
Amang the ladyes a',
That Marie Hamilton's brought to bed,
And the bonny babe's mist and awa'.

Scarcely had she lain down again,
And scarcely fa'en asleep,
When up then started our gude Queen,
Just at her bed-feet;
Saying—"Marie Hamilton, where's your babe?
For I am sure I heard it greet."—

"O no, O no, my noble Queen!
Think no such thing to be;
'Twas but a stitch into my side,
And sair it troubles me."—

"Get up, get up, Marie Hamilton:
Get up and follow me;

For I am going to Edinburgh town,
A rich wedding for to see."—

O slowly, slowly raise she up,
And slowly put she on;
And slowly rode she out the way,
Wi' mony a weary groan.

The Queen was clad in scarlet,
Her merry maids all in green;
And every town that they cam to,
They took Marie for the Queen.

"Ride hooly, hooly, gentlemen,
Ride hooly now wi' me!
For never, I am sure, a wearier burd
Rade in your companie."—

But little wist Marie Hamilton,
When she rade on the brown,
That she was ga'en to Edinburgh town,
And a' to be put down.

"Why weep ye so, ye burgess wives,
Why look ye so on me?
O, I am going to Edinburgh town,
A rich wedding for to see."—

When she gaed up the tolbooth stairs,
The corks frae her heels did flee;
And lang or e'er she cam down again,
She was condemn'd to die.

When she cam to the Netherbow port,
She laughed loud laughters three;
But when she cam to the gallows foot,
The tears blinded her ee.

"Yestreen the Queen had four Maries,
The night she'll hae but three;
There was Marie Seaton, and Marie Beaton,
And Marie Carmichael, and me.

"O, often have I dress'd my Queen,
And put gold upon her hair;
But now I've gotten for my reward
The gallows to be my share.

"Often have I dress'd my Queen,
And often made her bed;
But now I've gotten for my reward
The gallows tree to tread.

"I charge ye all, ye mariners,
When ye sail ower the faem,
Let neither my father nor mother get wit
But that I'm coming hame.

"I charge ye all, ye mariners,
That sail upon the sea,
Let neither my father nor mother get wit
This dog's death I'm to die.

"For if my father and mother got wit,
And my bold brethren three,

O mickle wad be the gude red blude
This day wad be spilt for me!

"O little did my mother ken,
That day she cradled me,
The lands I was to travel in,
Or the death I was to die!"

A LYKE-WAKE DIRGE

This ae nighte, this ae nighte,
Every night and alle;
Fire and sleete, and candle lighte,
And Christe receive thye saule.

When thou from hence away are paste,
Every night and alle;
To Whinny-muir thou comest at laste;
And Christe receive thye saule.

If ever thou gavest hosen and shoon,
Every night and alle;
Sit thee down and put them on;
And Christe receive thye saule.

If hosen and shoon thou ne'er gavest nane,
Every night and alle;
The whinnes shall pricke thee to the bare bane:
And Christe receive thye saule.

From Whinny-muir when thou mayst passe,
Every night and alle;
To Brigg o' Dread thou comest at laste;
And Christe receive thye saule.

* * * * *

(*A stanza wanting.*)

From Brigg o' Dread when thou mayst passe
  Every night and alle;
To purgatory fire thou comest at laste;
  And Christe receive thye saule.

If ever thou gavest meat or drink,
  Every night and alle;
The fire shall never make thee shrinke;
  And Christe receive thye saule.

If meate or drinke thou never gavest nane
  Every night and alle;
The fire will burn thee to the bare bane;
  And Christe receive thye saule.

This ae nighte, this ae nighte,
  Every night and alle;
Fire and sleete, and candle lighte,
  And Christe receive thye saule.

THE LASS OF LOCHROYAN

"O WHA will shoe my bonny foot?
And wha will glove my hand?
And wha will lace my middle jimp
Wi' a lang, lang linen band?

"O wha will kame my yellow hair,
With a new-made silver kame?
And wha will father my young son
Till Lord Gregory come hame?"—

"Thy father will shoe thy bonny foot,
Thy mother will glove thy hand,
Thy sister will lace thy middle jimp,
Till Lord Gregory come to land.

"Thy brother will kame thy yellow hair
With a new-made silver kame,
And God will be thy bairn's father
Till Lord Gregory come hame."—

"But I will get a bonny boat,
And I will sail the sea;
And I will gang to Lord Gregory,
Since he canna come hame to me."

Syne she's gar'd build a bonny boat,
To sail the salt, salt sea;
The sails were o' the light green silk,
The tows[1] o' taffety.

She hadna sailed but twenty leagues,
But twenty leagues and three,
When she met wi' a rank robber,
And a' his company.

"Now whether are ye the Queen hersell
(For so ye weel might be,)
Or are ye the Lass of Lochroyan,
Seekin' Lord Gregory?"—

"O I am neither the Queen," she said,
"Nor sic I seem to be;
But I am the Lass of Lochroyan,
Seekin' Lord Gregory."—

"O see na thou yon bonny bower,
It's a' cover'd o'er wi' tin?
When thou hast sail'd it round about,
Lord Gregory is within."

And when she saw the stately tower
Shining sae clear and bright,
Whilk stood aboon the jawing[2] wave,
Built on a rock of height;

[1] *Tows*—ropes. [2] *Jawing*—dashing.

Says—"Row the boat, my mariners,
And bring me to the land!
For yonder I see my love's castle
Close by the salt-sea strand."

She sail'd it round, and sail'd it round,
And loud, loud cried she—
"Now break, now break, ye fairy charms,
And set my true love free!"

She's ta'en her young son in her arms,
And to the door she's gane:
And long she knock'd, and sair she ca'd,
But answer got she nane.

"O open the door, Lord Gregory!
O open and let me in!
For the wind blows through my yellow hair,
And the rain draps o'er my chin."—

"Awa, awa, ye ill woman!
Ye're no come here for good!
Ye're but some witch or wil warlock,
Or mermaid o' the flood."—

"I am neither witch, nor wil warlock,
Nor mermaid o' the sea;
But I am Annie of Lochroyan;
O open the door to me!"—

"Gin thou be Annie of Lochroyan,
(As I trow thou binna she,)

Now tell me some o' the love-tokens
That past between thee and me."—

"O dinna ye mind, Lord Gregory,
As we sat at the wine,
We changed the rings frae our fingers,
And I can show thee thine?

"O yours was gude and gude enough,
But aye the best was mine;
For yours was o' the gude red gowd,
But mine o' the diamond fine.

"And has na thou mind, Lord Gregory,
As we sat on the hill,
Thou twin'd me o' my maidenheid
Right sair against my will?

"Now, open the door, Lord Gregory,
Open the door, I pray!
For thy young son is in my arms,
And will be dead ere day."

"If thou be the Lass of Lochroyan,
(As I kenna thou be,)
Tell me some mair o' the love-tokens
Past between me and thee."

Fair Annie turn'd her round about—
"Weel! since that it be sae,
May never a woman that has borne a son
Hae a heart sae fou o' wae!

"Take down, take down, that mast o' gowd!
Set up a mast o' tree!
It disna become a forsaken lady
To sail sae royallie."

When the cock had crawn, and the day did dawn,
And the sun began to peep,
Then up and raise him Lord Gregory,
And sair, sair did he weep.

"O I hae dream'd a dream, mother,
I wish it may prove true!
That the bonny Lass of Lochroyan
Was at the yate e'en now.

"O I hae dream'd a dream, mother,
The thought o't gars me greet!
That fair Annie o' Lochroyan
Lay cauld dead at my feet."—

"Gin it be for Annie of Lochroyan
That ye make a' this din,
She stood a' last night at your door,
But I trow she wan na in."—

"O wae betide ye, ill woman!
An ill deid may ye die!
That wadna open the door to her,
Nor yet wad waken me."

O he's gane down to yon shore side
As fast as he could fare;

He saw fair Annie in the boat,
But the wind it toss'd her sair.

"And hey, Annie, and how, Annie!
O Annie, winna ye bide!"
But aye the mair he cried Annie,
The braider grew the tide.

"And hey, Annie, and how, Annie!
Dear Annie, speak to me!"
But aye the louder he cried Annie,
The louder roar'd the sea.

The wind blew loud, the sea grew rough,
And dash'd the boat on shore;
Fair Annie floated through the faem,
But the babie rose no more.

Lord Gregory tore his yellow hair,
And made a heavy moan;
Fair Annie's corpse lay at his feet,
Her bonny young son was gone.

O cherry, cherry was her cheek,
And gowden was her hair;
But clay-cold were her rosy lips—
Nae spark o' life was there.

And first he kiss'd her cherry cheek,
And syne he kiss'd her chin,
And syne he kiss'd her rosy lips—
There was nae breath within.

"O wae betide my cruel mother!
An ill death may she die!
She turn'd my true love frae my door,
Wha cam sae far to me.

"O wae betide my cruel mother!
An ill death may she die!
She turn'd fair Annie frae my door,
Wha died for love o' me."

THE YOUNG TAMLANE

"O I FORBID ye, maidens a',
That wear gowd on your hair,
To come or gae by Carterhaugh,
For young Tamlane is there.

"There's nane that gaes by Carterhaugh
But maun leave him a wad,[1]
Either gowd rings or green mantles,
Or else their maidenheid.

"Now gowd rings ye may buy, maidens,
Green mantles ye may spin;
But gin ye lose your maidenheid,
Ye'll ne'er get that agen."—

But up then spake her, fair Janet,
The fairest o' a' her kin;
"I'll cum and gang to Carterhaugh,
And ask nae leave o' him."—

Janet has kilted her green kirtle,
A little abune her knee;
And she has braided her yellow hair,
A little abune her bree.

[1] *Wad*—pledge.

And when she came to Carterhaugh
She gaed beside the well;
And there she fand his steed standing,
But away was himsell.

She hadna pu'd a red red rose,
A rose but barely three;
Till up and starts a wee wee man,
At lady Janet's knee.

Says—"Why pu' ye the rose, Janet?
What gars ye break the tree?
Or why come ye to Carterhaugh,
Withouten leave o' me?"—

Says—"Carterhaugh it is mine ain;
My daddie gave it me:
I'll come and gang to Carterhaugh,
And ask nae leave o' thee."

He's ta'en her by the milk-white hand,
Among the leaves sae green;
And what they did, I cannot tell—
The green leaves were between.

He's ta'en her by the milk-white hand,
Among the roses red;
And what they did, I cannot say—
She ne'er return'd a maid.

When she cam to her father's ha',
She looked pale and wan;

They thought she'd dreed some sair sickness,
Or been with some leman.

She didna comb her yellow hair,
Nor make meikle o' her head;
And ilka thing that lady took,
Was like to be her deid.

It's four-and-twenty ladies fair
Were playing at the ba';
Janet, the wightest of them anes,
Was faintest o' them a'.

Four-and-twenty ladies fair
Were playing at the chess;
And out there came the fair Janet,
As green as any grass.

Out and spak an auld grey-headed knight,
Lay o'er the castle wa'—
"And ever, alas! for thee, Janet,
But we'll be blamed a'!"—

"Now haud your tongue, ye auld grey knight!
And an ill deid may ye die,
Father my bairn on whom I will,
I'll father nane on thee."—

Out then spak her father dear,
And he spak meik and mild—
"And ever, alas! my sweet Janet,
I fear ye gae with child."—

"And if I be with child, father,
Mysell maun bear the blame;
There's ne'er a knight about your ha'
Shall hae the bairnie's name.

"And if I be with child, father,
'Twill prove a wondrous birth;
For weel I swear I'm not wi' bairn
To any man on earth.

"If my love were an earthly knight,
As he's an elfin grey,
I wadna gie my ain true love
For nae lord that ye hae."—

She prink'd hersell and prinn'd hersell,
By the ae light of the moon,
And she's away to Carterhaugh,
To speak wi' young Tamlane.

And when she cam to Carterhaugh,
She gaed beside the well;
And there she saw the steed standing,
But away was himsell.

She hadna pu'd a double rose,
A rose but only twae,
When up and started young Tamlane,
Says—"Lady, thou pu's nae mae!

"Why pu' ye the rose, Janet,
Within this garden grene,
And a' to kill the bonny babe,
That we got us between?"—

"The truth ye'll tell to me, Tamlane;
A word ye mauna lie;
Gin e'er ye was in haly chapel,
Or sained[1] in Christentie?"—

"The truth I'll tell to thee, Janet
A word I winna lie;
A knight me got, and a lady me bore,
As well as they did thee.

"Randolph, Earl Murray, was my sire,
Dunbar, Earl March, is thine;
We loved when we were children small,
Which yet you well may mind.

"When I was a boy just turn'd of nine,
My uncle sent for me,
To hunt, and hawk, and ride with him,
And keep him companie.

"There came a wind out of the north,
A sharp wind and a snell;
And a deep sleep came over me,
And frae my horse I fell.

[1] *Sained*—hallowed.

"The Queen of Fairies keppit me
In yon green hill to dwell;
And I'm a fairy, lyth and limb;
Fair ladye, view me well.

"But we, that live in Fairy-land,
No sickness know, nor pain,
I quit my body when I will,
And take to it again.

"I quit my body when I please,
Or unto it repair;
We can inhabit, at our ease,
In either earth or air;

"Our shapes and size we can convert
To either large or small;
An old nutshell's the same to us
As is the lofty hall.

"We sleep in rose-buds soft and sweet,
We revel in the stream;
We wanton lightly on the wind,
Or glide on a sunbeam.

"And all our wants are well supplied
From every rich man's store,
Who thankless sins the gifts he gets,
And vainly grasps for more.

"Then would I never tire, Janet,
In Elfish land to dwell;

But aye, at every seven years,
They pay the teind to hell;
And I am sae fat and fair of flesh,
I fear 'twill be mysell.

"This night is Hallowe'en, Janet,
The morn is Hallowday;
And, gin ye dare your true love win,
Ye hae nae time to stay.

"The night it is good Hallowe'en,
When fairy folk will ride;
And they that wad their true-love win,
At Miles Cross they maun bide."—

"But how shall I thee ken, Tamlane?
Or how shall I thee knaw,
Amang so many unearthly knights,
The like I never saw?"—

"The first company that passes by,
Say na, and let them gae;
The next company that passes by,
Sae na, and do right sae;
The third company that passes by,
Then I'll be ane o' thae.

"First let pass the black, Janet,
And syne let pass the brown;
But grip ye to the milk-white steed,
And pu' the rider down.

"For I ride on the milk-white steed,
And aye nearest the town;
Because I was a christen'd knight,
They gave me that renown.

"My right hand will be gloved, Janet,
My left hand will be bare;
And these the tokens I gie thee,
Nae doubt I will be there.

"They'll turn me in your arms, Janet,
An adder and a snake;
But haud me fast, let me not pass,
Gin ye wad buy me maik.

"They'll turn me in your arms, Janet,
An adder and an ask;
They'll turn me in your arms, Janet,
A bale that burns fast.

"They'll turn me in your arms, Janet,
A red-hot gad o' airn;
But haud me fast, let me not pass,
For I'll do you no harm.

"First dip me in a stand o' milk,
And then in a stand o' water;
But haud me fast, let me not pass—
I'll be your bairn's father.

"And, next, they'll shape me in your arms,
A tod, but and an eel;

But haud me fast, nor let me gang,
As you do love me weel.

"They'll shape me in your arms, Janet,
A dove, but and a swan;
And, last, they'll shape me in your arms
A mother-naked man:
Cast your green mantle over me—
I'll be myself again."—

Gloomy, gloomy, was the night,
And eiry was the way,
As fair Janet in her green mantle,
To Miles Cross she did gae.

The heavens were black, the night was dark,
And dreary was the place;
But Janet stood, with eager wish,
Her lover to embrace.

Betwixt the hours of twelve and one,
A north wind tore the bent;
And straight she heard strange elritch sounds,
Upon that wind which went.

About the dead hour o' the night,
She heard the bridles ring;
And Janet was as glad o' that
As any earthly thing.

Their oaten pipes blew wondrous shrill,
The hemlock small blew clear;

And louder notes from hemlock large,
And bog-reed, struck the ear;
But solemn sounds, or sober thoughts,
The Fairies cannot bear.

They sing, inspired with love and joy,
Like skylarks in the air;
Of solid sense, or thought that's grave,
You'll find no traces there.

Fair Janet stood, with mind unmoved,
The dreary heath upon;
And louder, louder wax'd the sound,
As they came riding on.

Will o' Wisp before them went,
Sent forth a twinkling light;
And soon she saw the Fairy bands
All riding in her sight.

And first gaed by the black black steed,
And then gaed by the brown;
But fast she gript the milk-white steed,
And pu'd the rider down.

She pu'd him frae the milk-white steed,
And loot the bridle fa';
And up there raise an elritch cry—
"He's won among us a'!"

They shaped him in fair Janet's arms,
An ask, but and an adder;

She held him fast in every shape—
To be her bairn's father.

They shaped him in her arms at last,
A mother-naked man:
She wrapt him in her green mantle,
And sae her true love wan!

Up then spake the Queen o' Fairies,
Out o' a bush o' broom—
"She that has borrow'd young Tamlane
Has gotten a stately groom."—

Up then spake the Queen o' Fairies,
Out o' a bush o' rye—
"She's ta'en awa the bonniest knight
In a' my cumpanie.

"But had I kenn'd, Tamlane," she says,
"A lady wad borrow'd thee—
I wad ta'en out thy twa grey een,
Put in twa een o' tree.

"Had I but kenn'd, Tamlane," she says,
"Before ye came frae hame—
I wad ta'en out your heart o' flesh,
Put in a heart o' stane.

"Had I but had the wit yestreen
That I hae coft the day—
I'd paid my kane seven times to hell
Ere you'd been won away!"

THE CRUEL SISTER

THERE were two sisters sat in a bour,
Binnorie, O Binnorie,[1]
There came a knight to be their wooer;
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

He courted the eldest with glove and ring,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
But he lo'ed the youngest abune a' thing;
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

He courted the eldest with broach and knife,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
But he lo'ed the youngest abune his life;
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

The eldest she was vexed sair,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
And sore envied her sister fair;
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

The eldest said to the youngest ane,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
"Will ye go and see our father's ships come in?"—
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

[1] [Pronounced Binnŏrie.]

THE CRUEL SISTER

She's ta'en her by the lily hand,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
And led her down to the river strand;
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

The youngest stude upon a stane,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
The eldest came and pushed her in;
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

She took her by the middle sma',
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
And dash'd her bonny back to the jaw;
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

"O sister, sister, reach your hand,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
And ye shall be heir of half my land,"—
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

"O sister, I'll not reach my hand,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
And I'll be heir of all your land;
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

"Shame fa' the hand that I should take,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
It's twin'd me, and my world's make,"—
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

"O sister, reach me but your glove!
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
And sweet William shall be your love,"—
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

"Sink on, nor hope for hand or glove!
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
And sweet William shall better be my love,
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

"Your cherry cheeks and your yellow hair,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
Garr'd me gang maiden evermair,"—
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

Sometimes she sunk, and sometimes she swam,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
Until she cam to the miller's dam;
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

"O father, father, draw your dam!
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
There's either a mermaid, or a milk-white swan."—
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

The miller hasted and drew his dam,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
And there he found a drown'd woman;
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

THE CRUEL SISTER

You could not see her yellow hair,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
For gowd and pearls that were so rare;
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

You could not see her middle sma',
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
Her gowden girdle was sae bra';
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

A famous harper passing by,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
The sweet pale face he chanced to spy;
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

And when he looked that lady on,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
He sigh'd and made a heavy moan;
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

He made a harp of her breast-bone,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
Whose sounds would melt a heart of stone;
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

The strings he framed of her yellow hair,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
Whose notes made sad the listening ear;
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

He brought it to her father's hall,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
And there was the court assembled all;
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

He laid his harp upon a stone,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
And straight it began to play alone;
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

"O yonder sits my father, the King,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
And yonder sits my mother, the Queen;
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

"And yonder stands my brother Hugh,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
And by him my William, sweet and true."—
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

But the last tune that the harp play'd then,
Binnorie, O Binnorie;
Was—"Woe to my sister, false Helen!"
By the bonny milldams of Binnorie.

But fast she gript the milk-white steed
Aud pu'd the rider down.—

See p. 106.

THOMAS THE RHYMER

Part First

(*Ancient*)

True Thomas lay on Huntlie bank;
A ferlie he spied wi' his ee;
And there he saw a ladye bright,
Come riding down by the Eildon Tree.

Her shirt was o' the grass-green silk,
Her mantle o' the velvet fyne;
At ilka tett of her horse's mane,
Hung fifty siller bells and nine.

True Thomas, he pull'd aff his cap,
And louted low down to his knee,
"All hail, thou mighty Queen of Heaven!
For thy peer on earth I never did see."—

"O no, O no, Thomas," she said,
"That name does not belang to me;
I am but the Queen of fair Elfland,
That am hither come to visit thee.

"Harp and carp, Thomas," she said;
"Harp and carp along wi' me;
And if ye dare to kiss my lips,
Sure of your bodie I will be."—

"Betide me weal, betide me woe,
That weird[1] shall never daunton me."—
Syne he has kissed her rosy lips,
All underneath the Eildon Tree.

"Now, ye maun go wi' me," she said;
"True Thomas, ye maun go wi' me;
And ye maun serve me seven years,
Thro' weal or woe as may chance to be."

She mounted on her milk-white steed;
She's ta'en true Thomas up behind:
And aye, whene'er her bridle rung,
The steed flew swifter than the wind.

O they rade on, and farther on;
The steed gaed swifter than the wind;
Until they reach'd a desert wide,
And living land was left behind.

"Light down, light down, now, true Thomas,
And lean your head upon my knee;
Abide and rest a little space,
And I will shew you ferlies three.

[1] *That weird, etc.*—that destiny shall never frighten me.

"O see ye not yon narrow road,
So thick beset with thorns and briers?
That is the path of righteousness,
Though after it but few enquires.

"And see ye not that braid braid road,
That lies across that lily leven?
That is the path of wickedness,
Though some call it the road to heaven.

"And see not ye that bonny road,
That winds about the fernie brae?
That is the road to fair Elfland,
Where thou and I this night maun gae.

"But, Thomas, ye maun hold your tongue,
Whatever ye may hear or see;
For, if you speak word in Elfyn land,
Ye'll ne'er get back to your ain countrie."

O they rade on, and farther on,
And they waded through rivers aboon the knee,
And they saw neither sun nor moon,
But they heard the roaring of the sea.

It was mirk mirk night, and there was nae stern light,
And they waded through red blude to the knee;
For a' the blude that's shed on earth
Rins through the springs o' that countrie.

Syne they came on to a garden green,
And she pu'd an apple frae a tree—
"Take this for thy wages, true Thomas;
It will give thee the tongue that can never lie."—

"My tongue is mine ain," true Thomas said;
"A gudely gift ye wad gie to me!
I neither dought to buy nor sell,
At fair or tryst where I may be.

"I dought neither speak to prince or peer,
Nor ask of grace from fair ladye."—
"Now hold thy peace!" the lady said,
"For as I say, so must it be."—

He has gotten a coat of the even cloth,
And a pair of shoes of velvet green,
And till seven years were gane and past,
True Thomas on earth was never seen.

THOMAS THE RHYMER

Part Second

When seven years were come and gane,
The sun blinked fair on pool and stream,
And Thomas lay on Huntlie bank,
Like one awaken'd from a dream.

He heard the trampling of a steed,
He saw the flash of armour flee,
And he beheld a gallant knight
Come riding down by the Eildon-tree.

He was a stalwart knight, and strong;
Of giant make he 'pear'd to be:
He stirr'd his horse, as he were wode,
Wi' gilded spurs, of faushion free.

Says—"Well met, well met, true Thomas!
Some uncouth ferlies show to me."—
Says—"Christ thee save, Corspatrick brave!
Thrice welcume, good Dunbar, to me!

"Light down, light down, Corspatrick brave!
And I will show thee curses three,

Shall gar fair Scotland greet and grane,
And change the green to the black livery.

"A storm shall roar this very hour,
From Ross's Hills to Solway sea."—
"Ye lied, ye lied, ye warlock hoar!
For the sun shines sweet on fauld and lea."

He put his hand on the Earlie's head;
He show'd him a rock beside the sea,
Where a king lay stiff beneath his steed,[1]
And steel-dight nobles wiped their ee.

"The neist curse lights on Branxton hills:
By Flodden's high and heathery side,
Shall wave a banner red as blude,
And chieftain's throng wi' meikle pride.

"A Scottish King shall come full keen,
The ruddy lion beareth he;
A feather'd arrow sharp, I ween,
Shall make him wink and warre to see.

"When he is bloody, and all to bledde,
Thus to his men he still shall say—
'For God's sake, turn ye back again,
And give yon southern folk a fray!
Why should I lose, the right is mine?
My doom is not to die this day.'

[1] King Alexander, killed by a fall from his horse, near Kinghorn.

"Yet turn ye to the eastern hand,
And woe and wonder ye sall see;
How forty thousand spearmen stand,
Where yon rank river meets the sea.

"There shall the lion lose the gylte,
And the libbards bear it clean away;
At Pinkyn Cleuch there shall be spilt
Much gentil bluid that day."—

'Enough, enough, of curse and ban;
Some blessings show thou now to me,
Or, by the faith o' my bodie," Corspatrick said,
"Ye shall rue the day ye e'er saw me!"—

"The first of blessings I shall thee show,
Is by a burn, that's call'd of bread;
Where Saxon men shall tine the bow,
And find their arrows lack the head.

"Beside that brigg, out ower that burn,
Where the water bickereth bright and sheen,
Shall many a falling courser spurn,
And knights shall die in battle keen.

"Beside a headless cross of stone,
The libbards there shall lose the gree;
The raven shall come, the erne shall go,
And drink the Saxon bluid sae free.
The cross of stone they shall not know,
So thick the corses there shall be."—

"But tell me now," said brave Dunbar,
"True Thomas, tell now unto me,
What man shall rule the isle Britain,
Even from the north to the southern sea?"

"A French Queen shall bear the son,
Shall rule all Britain to the sea;
He of the Bruce's blood shall come,
As near as in the ninth degree.

"The waters worship shall his race;
Likewise the waves of the farthest sea;
For they shall ride over ocean wide,
With hempen bridles, and horse of tree."

THOMAS THE RHYMER

Part Third

(By Sir Walter Scott)

When seven years more were come and gone,
Was war through Scotland spread,
And Ruberslaw show'd high Dunyon
His beacon blazing red.

Then all by bonny Coldingknow,
Pitch'd palliouns took their room,
And crested helms, and spears a-rowe,
Glanced gaily through the broom.

The Leader, rolling to the Tweed,
Resounds the ensenzie;[1]
They roused the deer from Caddenhead,
To distant Torwoodlee.

The feast was spread in Ercildoune,
In Learmont's high and ancient hall:
And there were knights of great renown,
And ladies, laced in pall.

[1] *Ensenzie*—war-cry, or gathering-word.

Nor lacked they, while they sat at dine,
The music nor the tale,
Nor goblets of the blood-red wine,
Nor mantling quaighs[1] of ale.

True Thomas rose, with harp in hand,
When as the feast was done:
(In minstrel strife, in Fairy Land,
The elfin harp he won.)

Hush'd were the throng, both limb and tongue,
And harpers for envy pale;
And armed lords lean'd on their swords,
And hearken'd to the tale.

In numbers high, the witching tale
The prophet pour'd along;
No after bard might e'er avail
Those numbers to prolong.

Yet fragments of the lofty strain
Float down the tide of years,
As, buoyant on the stormy main,
A parted wreck appears.

He sung King Arthur's Table Round:
The Warrior of the Lake;
How courteous Gawaine met the wound,
And bled for ladies' sake.

[1] *Quaighs*—wooden cups, composed of staves hooped together.

But chief, in gentle Tristrem's praise,
The notes melodious swell;
Was none excell'd in Arthur's days,
The knight of Lionelle.

For Marke, his cowardly uncle's right,
A venom'd wound he bore;
When fierce Morholde he slew in fight,
Upon the Irish shore.

No art the poison might withstand;
No medicine could be found,
Till lovely Isolde's lily hand
Had probed the rankling wound.

With gentle hand and soothing tongue
She bore the leech's part;
And, while she o'er his sick-bed hung,
He paid her with his heart.

O fatal was the gift, I ween!
For, doom'd in evil tide,
The maid must be rude Cornwall's queen,
His cowardly uncle's bride.

Their loves, their woes, the gifted bard,
In fairy tissue wove;
Where lords, and knights, and ladies bright,
In gay confusion strove.

The Garde Joyeuse, amid the tale,
High rear'd its glittering head;
And Avalon's enchanted vale
In all its wonders spread.

Brangwain was there, and Segramore,
And fiend-born Merlin's gramarye;
Of that famed wizard's mighty lore,
O who could sing but he?

Through many a maze the winning song
In changeful passion led,
Till bent at length the listening throng
O'er Tristrem's dying bed.

His ancient wounds their scars expand,
With agony his heart is wrung:
O where is Isolde's lilye hand,
And where her soothing tongue?

She comes! she comes!—like flash of flame
Can lovers' footsteps fly:
She comes! she comes!—she only came
To see her Tristrem die.

She saw him die; her latest sigh
Join'd in a kiss his parting breath;
The gentlest pair, that Britain bare,
United are in death.

There paus'd the harp: its lingering sound
Died slowly on the ear;
The silent guests still bent around,
For still they seem'd to hear.

Then woe broke forth in murmurs weak:
Nor ladies heaved alone the sigh;
But, half ashamed, the rugged cheek
Did many a gauntlet dry.

On Leader's stream, and Learmont's tower,
The mists of evening close;
In camp, in castle, or in bower,
Each warrior sought repose.

Lord Douglas, in his lofty tent,
Dream'd o'er the woeful tale;
When footsteps light, across the bent,
The warrior's ear assail.

He starts, he wakes—"What, Richard, ho!
Arise, my page, arise!
What venturous wight, at dead of night,
Dare step where Douglas lies!"—

Then forth they rush'd: by Leader's tide,
A selcouth[1] sight they see—
A hart and hind pace side by side,
As white as snow on Fairnalie.

[1] *Selcouth*—wondrous.

Beneath the moon, with gesture proud,
  They stately move and slow;
Nor scare they at the gathering crowd,
  Who marvel as they go.

To Learmont's tower a message sped,
  As fast as page might run;
And Thomas started from his bed,
  And soon his clothes did on.

First he woxe pale, and then woxe red;
  Never a word he spake but three;—
"My sand is run; my thread is spun;
  This sign regardeth me."

The elfin harp his neck around,
  In minstrel guise, he hung;
And on the wind, in doleful sound,
  Its dying accents rung.

Then forth he went; yet turn'd him oft
  To view his ancient hall:
On the grey tower, in lustre soft,
  The autumn moonbeams fall;

And Leader's waves, like silver sheen,
  Danced shimmering in the ray;
In deepening mass, at distance seen,
  Broad Soltra's mountains lay.

"Farewell, my father's ancient tower!
A long farewell," said he:
"The scene of pleasure, pomp, or power,
Thou never more shalt be.

"To Learmont's name no foot of earth
Shall here again belong,
And, on thy hospitable hearth,
The hare shall leave her young.

"Adieu! adieu!" again he cried,
All as he turned him roun'—
"Farewell to Leader's silver tide!
Farewell to Ercildoune!"

The hart and hind approach'd the place,
As lingering yet he stood;
And there, before Lord Douglas' face,
With them he cross'd the flood.

Lord Douglas leap'd on his berry-brown steed,
And spurr'd him the Leader o'er;
But, though he rode with lightning speed,
He never saw them more.

Some said to hill, and some to glen,
Their wondrous course had been;
But ne'er in haunts of living men
Again was Thomas seen.

ARMSTRONG'S GOOD-NIGHT

This night is my departing night,
For here nae langer must I stay;
There's neither friend nor foe o' mine,
But wishes me away.

What I have done thro' lack of wit,
I never, never can recall;
I hope ye're a' my friends as yet;
Good-night and joy be with you all!

* * * * *

APPENDIX

The following ballads, though not of the high poetic rank of those preceding, have a beauty that only falls short of the very highest.

JELLON GRAME

O Jellon Grame sat in Silverwood,[1]
He sharp'd his broadsword lang;
And he has call'd his little foot-page
An errand for to gang.

"Win up, my bonny boy," he says,
"As quickly as ye may;
For ye maun gang for Lillie Flower
Before the break of day."—

The boy has buckled his belt about,
And through the green-wood ran;
And he came to the ladye's bower
Before the day did dawn.

"O sleep ye, wake ye, Lillie Flower?
The red sun's on the rain:
Ye're bidden come to Silverwood,
But I doubt ye'll never win hame."—

[1] "Silverwood gin ye were mine."

She hadna ridden a mile, a mile,
A mile but barely three,
Ere she came to a new-made grave,
Beneath a green aik tree.

O then up started Jellon Grame,
Out of a bush thereby;
"Light down, light down, now, Lillie Flower,
For it's here that ye maun lye."—

She lighted aff her milk-white steed,
And kneel'd upon her knee;
"O mercy, mercy, Jellon Grame,
For I'm no prepared to die!

"Your bairn, that stirs between my sides,
Maun shortly see the light:
But to see it weltering in my blood,
Would be a piteous sight."—

"O should I spare your life," he says,
"Until that bairn were born,
Full weel I ken your auld father
Would hang me on the morn."—

"O spare my life, now, Jellon Grame!
My father ye needna dread:
I'll keep my babe in gude green-wood,
Or wi' it I'll beg my bread."—

He took no pity on Lillie Flower,
Though she for life did pray;
But pierced her through the fair body
As at his feet she lay.

He felt nae pity for Lillie Flower,
  Where she was lying dead;
But he felt some for the bonny bairn,
  That lay weltering in her bluid.

Up has he ta'en that bonny boy,
  Given him to nurses nine;
Three to sleep, and three to wake,
  And three to go between.

And he bred up that bonny boy,
  Call'd him his sister's son?
And he thought no eye could ever see
  The deed that he had done.

O so it fell upon a day,
  When hunting they might be,
They rested them in Silverwood,
  Beneath that green aik tree.

And many were the green-wood flowers
  Upon the grave that grew,
And marvell'd much that bonny boy
  To see their lovely hue.

"What's paler than the prymrose wan?
  What's redder than the rose?
What's fairer than the lilye flower
  On this wee know that grows?"—

O out and answer'd Jellon Grame,
  And he spak hastilie—
"Your mother was a fairer flower,
  And lies beneath this tree.

"More pale she was, when she sought my grace,
Than prymrose pale and wan;
And redder than rose her ruddy heart's blood,
That down my broadsword ran."—

Wi' that the boy has bent his bow,
It was baith stout and lang;
And thro' and thro' him, Jellon Grame,
He gar'd an arrow gang.

Says—"Lie ye there, now, Jellon Grame!
My malisoun gang you wi'!
The place that my mother lies buried in
Is far too good for thee."

ROSE THE RED AND WHITE LILLY

O Rose the Red, and White Lilly,
  Their mother deir was dead;
And their father has married an ill woman,
  Wished them twa little guid.

But she had twa as gallant sons
  As ever brake man's bread;
And the tane o' them lo'ed her, White Lilly,
  And the t'other Rose the Red.

O bigged hae they a bigly bour,
  Fast by the roaring strand;
And there was mair mirth in the ladyes' bour,
  Nor in a' their father's land.

But out and spak their step-mother,
  As she stood a little forbye—
"I hope to live and play the prank,
  Sall gar your loud sang lie."

She's call'd upon her eldest son;
  "Cum here, my son, to me:
It fears me sair, my Bauld Arthur,
  That ye maun sail the sea."—

"Gin sae it maun be, my deir mother,
Your bidding I maun dee;
But be never waur to Rose the Red
Than ye hae been to me."

She's eall'd upon her youngest son;
"Cum here, my son, to me:
It fears me sair, my Brown Robin,
That ye maun sail the sea."—

"Gin it fear ye sair, my mother deir,
Your bidding I sall dee;
But, be never waur to White Lilly,
Than ye hae been to me."—

"Now haud your tongues, ye foolish boys!
For small sall be their part:
They ne'er again sall see your face,
Gin their very hearts suld break."

Sae Bauld Arthur's gane to our King's court,
His hie chamberlain to be;
But Brown Robin, he has slain a knight,
And to grene-wood he did flee.

When Rose the Red and White Lilly
Saw their twa loves were gane,
Sune did they drop the loud, loud sang,
Took up the still mourning.

And out then spake her White Lilly;
"My sister, we'll be gane:
Why suld we stay in Barnisdale,
To mourn our bour within?"

O cutted hae they their green cloathing,
A little abune their knee;
And sae hae they their yellow hair,
A little abune their bree.

And left hae they that bonny bour,
To cross the raging sea;
And they hae ta'en to a holy chapel,
Was christened by Our Ladye.

And they hae changed their twa names,
Sae far frae ony toun;
And the tane o' them's hight Sweet Willie,
And the t'other's Rouge the Rounde.

Between the twa a promise is,
And they hae sworn it to fulfil;
Whenever the tane blew a bugle-horn,
The t'other suld cum her till.

Sweet Willy's gane to the King's court,
Her true love for to see;
And Rouge the Rounde to gude grene-wood,
Brown Robin's man to be.

O it fell anes, upon a tyme,
They putted at the stane;
And seven foot ayont them a',
Brown Robin's gar'd it gang.

She lifted the heavy putting-stane,
And gave a sad "O hon!"
Then out bespake him, Brown Robin
"But that's a woman's moan!"—

"O kent ye by my rosy lips?
Or by my yellow hair?
Or kent ye by my milk-white breast,
Ye never yet saw bare?"—

"I kent na by your rosy lips,
Nor by your yellow hair;
But, cum to your bour whaever likes
They'll find a ladye there."—

"O gin ye cum my bour within,
Through fraud, deceit, or guile;
Wi' this same brand, that's in my hand,
I vow I will thee kill."—

"Yet durst I cum into your bour,
And ask nae leave," quo' he;
"And wi' this same brand, that's in my hand,
Wave danger back on thee."

About the dead hour o' the night,
The ladye's bour was broken;
And, about the first hour of the day,
The fair knave bairn was gotten.

When days were gane and months were come,
The ladye was sad and wan;
And aye she cried for a bour woman,
For to wait her upon.

Then up and spake him, Brown Robin,
"And what needs this?" quo' he;
"Or what can woman do for you,
That canna be done by me?"—

"'Twas never my mother's fashion," she said,
"Nor shall it e'er be mine,
That belted knights should e'er remain
While ladyes dree'd their pain.

"But gin ye take that bugle-horn,
And wind a blast sae shrill,
I hae a brother in yonder court
Will come me quickly till."—

"O gin ye hae a brother on earth,
That ye lo'e mair than me,
Ye may blow the horn yoursell," he says,
"For a blast I winna gie."

She's ta'en the bugle in her hand,
And blawn baith loud and shrill;
Sweet William started at the sound,
And came her quickly till.

O up and starts him, Brown Robin,
And swore by Our Ladye,
"No man shall come into this bour,
But first maun fight wi' me."

O they hae fought the wood within,
Till the sun was going down:
And drops o' blood, frae Rose the Red,
Came pouring to the ground.

She leant her back against an aik,
Said—"Robin, let me be;
For it is a ladye, bred and born,
That has fought this day wi' thee."

O seven foot he started back,
Cried—"Alas and woe is me!
For I wished never, in all my life,
A woman's bluid to see:

"And that all for the knightly vow
I swore to Our Ladye:
But mair for the sake o' ae fair maid,
Whose name was White Lilly."

Then out and spake her, Rouge the Rounde,
And leugh right hertilie,
"She has been wi' ye this year and mair,
Though ye wistna it was she."

Now word is gane through all the land,
Before a month was gane,
That a forester's page, in gude grene-wood,
Had born a bonny son.

The marvel gaed to the King's court,
And to the King himsell;
"Now, by my fae," the King did say,
"The like was never heard tell!"

Then out and spake him, Bauld Arthur,
And laugh'd right loud and hie—
"I trow some may has plaid the lown,
And fled her ain countrie."—

"Bring me my steid!" the King can say;
"My bow and arrows keen;
And I'll gae hunt in yonder wood,
And see what's to be seen."—

"Gin it please your grace," quo' Bauld Arthur,
"My liege, I'll gang you wi',
And see gin I can meet a bonny page,
That's stray'd awa frae me."

And they hae chased in gude grene-wood,
The buck but and the rae,
Till they drew near Brown Robin's bour,
About the close o' day.

Then out an' spake the King himsell,
Says—"Arthur, look and see,
Gin yon be not your favourite page,
That leans against yon tree."

O Arthur's ta'en a bugle-horn,
And blawn a blast sae shrill;
Sweet Willie started to her feet,
And ran him quickly till.

"O wanted ye your meat, Willie,
Or wanted ye your fee?
Or gat ye e'er an angry word,
That ye ran awa frae me?"—

"I wanted nought, my master dear;
To me ye aye was good:
I cam to see my ae brother,
That wons in this grene-wood."

Then out bespake the King again,—
"My boy, now tell to me,
Who dwells into yon bigly bour,
Beneath yon green aik tree?"—

"O pardon me," said Sweet Willy,
"My liege, I darena tell;
And gangna near yon Outlaw's bour,
For fear they suld you kill."—

"O haud your tongue, my bonny boy!
For I winna be said nay;
But I will gang yon bour within,
Betide me weal or wae."

They have lighted frae their milk-white steids,
And saftlie entered in;
And there they saw her, White Lilly,
Nursing her bonny young son.

"Now, by the mass," the King he said,
"This is a comely sight;
I trow, instead of a forester's man,
This is a ladye bright!"

O out and spake her, Rose the Red,
And fell low on her knee:—
"O pardon us, my gracious liege,
And our story I'll tell thee.

"Our father is a wealthy lord,
Lives into Barnisdale;
But we had a wicked step-mother,
That wrought us meikle bale.

"Yet had she twa as fu' fair sons,
As e'er the sun did see;
And the tane o' them lo'ed my sister deir,
And the t'other said he lo'ed me."—

Then out and cried him, Bauld Arthur,
As by the King he stood,—
"Now, by the faith of my body,
This suld be Rose the Red!"

The King has sent for robes o' green,
And girdles o' shining gold;
And sae sune have the ladyes busked themselves
Sae glorious to behold.

Then in and came him, Brown Robin,
Frae hunting o' the King's deer,
But when he saw the King himsell,
He started back for fear.

The King has ta'en Robin by the hand,
And bade him nothing dread,
But quit for aye the gude grene-wood,
And come to the court wi' speed.

The King has ta'en White Lilly's son,
And set him on his knee;
Says—"Gin ye live to wield a brand,
My bowman thou sall be."

Then they have ta'en them to the holy chapelle,
And there had fair wedding;
And when they cam to the King's court,
For joy the bells did ring.

O GIN MY LOVE WERE YON RED ROSE

FROM MR. HERD'S MS.

O GIN my love were yon red rose,
That grows upon the castle wa',
And I mysell a drap of dew,
Down on that red rose I would fa',
O my love's bonny, bonny, bonny;
My love's bonny, and fair to see;
Whene'er I look on her weel-faur'd face,
She looks and smiles again to me.

O gin my love were a pickle of wheat,
And growing upon yon lily lee,
And I mysell a bonny wee bird,
Awa' wi' that pickle o' wheat I wad flee.
O my love's bonny, etc.

O gin my love were a coffer o' gowd,
And I the keeper of the key,
I wad open the kist whene'er I list,
And in that coffer I wad be.
O my love's bonny, etc.

ANNAN WATER

"Annan Water's wading deep,
And my love Annie's wondrous bonny;
And I am laith she suld weet her feet,
Because I love her best of ony.

"Gar saddle me the bonny black,
Gar saddle sune, and make him ready;
For I will down the Gatehope-Slack,
And all to see my bonny ladye."—

He has loupen on the bonny black,
He stirr'd him wi' the spur right sairly;
But, or he wan the Gatehope-Slack,
I think the steed was wae and weary.

He has loupen on the bonny grey,
He rade the right gate and the ready;
I trow he would neither stint nor stay,
For he was seeking his bonny ladye.

O he has ridden o'er field and fell,
Through muir and moss, and mony a mire:
His spurs o' steel were sair to bide,
And frae her fore-feet flew the fire.

"Now, bonny grey, now play your part!
Gin ye be the steed that wins my deary,
Wi' corn and hay ye'se be fed for aye,
And never spur sall make you wearie."—

The grey was a mare, and a right good mare;
But when she wan the Annan Water,
She couldna hae ridden a furlong mair,
Had a thousand merks been wadded[1] at her.

"O boatman, boatman, put off your boat!
Put off your boat for gowden money!
I cross the drumly stream the night,
Or never mair I see my honey."—

"O I was sworn sae late yestreen,
And not by ae aith, but by many;
And for a' the gowd in fair Scotland,
I dare na take ye through to Annie."—

The side was stey, and the bottom deep,
Frae bank to brae the water pouring;
And the bonny grey mare did sweat for fear,
For she heard the water-kelpy roaring.

O he has pou'd aff his dapperpy coat,
The silver buttons glanced bonny;
The waistcoat bursted aff his breast,
He was sae full of melancholy.

[1] *Wadded*—Wagered.

He has ta'en the ford at that stream tail ;
I wot he swam both strong and steady,
But the stream was broad, and his strength did fail,
And he never saw his bonny ladye!

O wae betide the frush saugh wand!
And wae betide the bush of brier,
It brake into my true love's hand,
When his strength did fail, and his limbs did tire.

"And wae betide ye, Annan Water,
This night that ye are a drumlie river!
For over thee I'll build a bridge,
That ye never more true love may sever."

THE DOWIE DENS OF YARROW[1]

Late at e'en, drinking the wine,
And ere they paid the lawing,
They set a combat them between,
To fight it in the dawing.

"O stay at hame, my noble lord,
O stay at hame, my marrow!
My cruel brother will you betray
On the dowie houms of Yarrow."—

"O fare ye weel, my ladye gaye!
O fare ye weel, my Sarah!
For I maun gae, though I ne'er return
Frae the dowie banks o' Yarrow."

She kiss'd his cheek, she kaim'd his hair,
As oft she had done before, O;
She belted him with his noble brand,
And he's away to Yarrow.

[1] [*Dowie* means *melancholy*.

"Meek loveliness is round thee spread,
A softness still and holy—
The grace of forest charms decayed,
And pastoral melancholy."

—*Yarrow Visited*.]

As he gaed up the Tennies bank,
I wot he gaed wi' sorrow,
Till, down in a den, he spied nine arm'd men,
On the dowie houms of Yarrow.

"O come ye here to part your land,
The bonnie Forest thorough?
Or come ye here to wield your brand,
On the dowie houms of Yarrow?"—

"I come not here to part my land,
And neither to beg nor borrow;
I come to wield my noble brand,
On the bonnie banks of Yarrow.

"If I see all, ye're nine to ane;
And that's an unequal marrow;
Yet will I fight, while lasts my brand,
On the bonnie banks of Yarrow."

Four has he hurt, and five has slain,
On the bloody braes of Yarrow,
Till that stubborn knight came him behind,
And ran his body thorough.

"Gae hame, gae hame, good-brother John,
And tell your sister Sarah,
To come and lift her leafu' lord;
He's sleepin' sound on Yarrow."—

"Yestreen I dream'd a dolefu' dream;
I fear there will be sorrow!
I dream'd I pu'd the heather green,
Wi' my true love on Yarrow.

"O gentle wind, that bloweth south,
From where my love repaireth,
Convey a kiss from his dear mouth,
And tell me how he fareth!

"But in the glen strive armed men;
Thy've wrought me dool and sorrow;
They've slain—the comeliest knight they've slain—
He bleeding lies on Yarrow."

As she sped down yon high, high hill,
She gaed wi' dool and sorrow,
And in the den spied ten slain men,
On the dowie banks of Yarrow.

She kissed his cheek, she kaim'd his hair,
She searched his wounds all thorough,
She kiss'd them, till her lips grew red,
On the dowie houms of Yarrow.

"Now haud your tongue, my daughter dear,
For a' this breeds but sorrow;
I'll wed ye to a better lord,
Than him ye lost on Yarrow."

"O haud your tongue, my father dear!
Ye mind me but of sorrow;
A fairer rose did never bloom
Than now lies cropp'd on Yarrow."

ARCHIE OF CA'FIELD

As I was a-walking mine alane,
It was by the dawning of the day,
I heard twa brithers make their mane,
And I listen'd weel to what they did say.

The youngest to the eldest said,
"Blythe and merrie how can we be?
There were three brithren of us born,
And ane of us is condemn'd to die."—

"An ye wad be merrie, and ye wad be sad,
What the better wad billy Archie be?
Unless I had thirty men to mysell,
And a' to ride in my companie.

"Ten to hald the horses' heads,
And other ten the watch to be,
And ten to break up the strong prison,
Where billy Archie he does lie."—

Then up and spak him mettled John Hall,
(The luve of Teviotdale aye was he),
"An I had eleven men to mysell,
It's aye the twalt man I wad be."—

Then up bespak him coarse Ga'field,
(I wot and little gude worth was he),
"Thirty men is few anew,
And a' to ride in our companie."—

There was horsing, horsing in haste,
And there was marching on the lee;
Until they cam to Murraywhate,
And they lighted there right speedilie.

"A smith! a smith!" Dickie he cries,
"A smith, a smith, right speedilie,
To turn back the caukers of our horses' shoon!
For it's unkensome we wad be."—

There lives a smith on the water-side,
Will shoe my little black mare for me;
And I've a crown in my pocket,
And every groat of it I wad gie."—

"The night is mirk, and it's very mirk,
And by candle-light I canna weel see;
The night is mirk, and it's very pit mirk,
And there will never a nail ca' right for me."—

"Shame fa' you and your trade baith,
Canna beet a good fellow by your mystery;[1]
But leeze me on thee, my little black mare,
Thou's worth thy weight in gold to me."—

There was horsing, horsing in haste,
And there was marching upon the lee;

[1] *Mystery*—Trade. See Shakespeare.

Until they cam to Dumfries port,
And they lighted there right speedilie.

"There's five of us will hold the horse,
And other five will watchmen be:
But wha's the man among ye a',
Will gae to the Tolbooth door wi' me?"—

O up then spak him mettled John Hall,
(Frae the Laigh Teviotdale was he),
"If it should cost my life this very night,
I'll gae to the Tolbooth door wi' thee."—

"Be of gude cheir, now, Archie, lad!
Be of gude cheir, now, dear billy!
Work thou within, and we without,
And the morn thou'se dine at Ca'field wi' me."—

O Jockie Hall stepp'd to the door,
And he bended low back his knee,
And he made the bolts, the door hang on,
Loup frae the wa' right wantonlie.

He took the prisoner on his back,
And down the Tolbooth stair cam he:
The black mare stood ready at the door,
I wot a foot ne'er stirred she.

They laid the links out owre her neck,
And that was her gold twist to be;[1]
And they cam doun thro' Dumfries toun,
And wow but they cam speedilie.

[1] The *Gold Twist* means the small gilded chains drawn across the chest of a war-horse, as a part of his caparison.

The live-lang night these twelve men rade,
And aye till they were right wearie,
Until they cam to the Murraywhate,
And they lighted there right speedilie.

"A smith! a smith!" then Dickie he cries,
"A smith, a smith, right speedilie.
To file the irons frae my dear brither!
For forward, forward we wad be."—

They hadna filed a shackle of iron,
A shackle of iron but barely thrie,
When out and spak young Simon brave,
"O dinna you see what I do see?

"Lo! yonder comes Lieutenant Gordon,
Wi' a hundred men in his companie;
This night will be our lyke-wake night,
The morn the day we a' maun die."—

O there was mounting, mounting in haste,
And there was marching upon the lee;
Until they cam to Annan Water,
And it was flowing like the sea.

"My mare is young and very skeigh,
And in o' the weil she will drown me;
But ye'll take mine, and I'll take thine,
And sune through the water we sall be."—

Then up and spak him coarse Ca'field,
(I wot and little gude worth was he),
"We had better lose ane than lose a' the lave;
We'll lose the prisoner, we'll gae free."—

"Shame fa' you and your lands baith!
Wad ye e'en your lands to your born billy?
But hey! bear up, my bonnie black mare,
And yet thro' the water we sall be."

Now they did swim that wan water,
And wow but they swam bonnilie!
Until they cam to the other side,
And they wrang their cloathes right drunkily.

"Come thro', come thro', Lieutenant Gordon!
Come thro' and drink some wine wi' me!
For there is an ale-house here hard by,
And it shall not cost thee ae penny."—

"Throw me my irons," quo' Lieutenant Gordon;
"I wot they cost me dear enough."—
"The shame a ma," quo' mettled John Ha',
"They'll be gude shackles to my pleugh."—

"Come thro', come thro', Lieutenant Gordon!
Come thro' and drink some wine wi' me
Yestreen I was your prisoner,
But now this morning am I free."

JOCK O' THE SIDE

Now Liddesdale has ridden a raid,
  But I wat they had better hae staid at hame;
For Michael o' Winfield he is dead,
  And Jock o' the Side is prisoner ta'en.

For Mangerton house Lady Downie has gane,
  Her coats she has kilted up to her knee;
And down the water wi' speed she rins,
  While tears in spaits fa' fast frae her ee.

Then up and spoke her gude auld lord—
  "What news, what news, sister Downie, to me?"—
"Bad news, bad news, my Lord Mangerton;
  Michael is killed, and they hae ta'en my son Johnie."

—"Ne'er fear, sister Downie," quo' Mangerton;
  "I have yokes of ousen, eighty and three;
My barns, my byres, and my faulds, a' weil fill'd,
  I'll part wi' them a' ere Johnie shall die.

"Three men I'll send to set him free,
  A' harneist wi' the best o' steil;
The English louns may hear and drie
  The weight o' their braid-swords to feel.

"The Laird's Jock ane, the Laird's Wat twa,
O Hobbie Noble, thou ane maun be!
Thy coat is blue, thou hast been true,
Since England banished thee, to me."—

Now Hobbie was an English man,
In Bewcastle-dale was bred and born;
But his misdeeds they were sae great,
They banished him ne'er to return.

Lord Mangerton them orders gave,
"Your horses the wrong way maun be shod,
Like gentlemen ye mauna seem,
But look like corn-caugers[1] ga'en the road.

"Your armour gude ye mauna shaw,
Nor yet appear like men o' weir;
As country lads be a' array'd,
Wi' branks and brecham[2] on each mare."—

Sae now their horses are the wrong way shod,
And Hobbie has mounted his grey sae fine;
Jock his lively bay, Wat's on his white horse behind,
And on they rode for the water of Tyne.

At the Cholerford they a' light down,
And there, wi' the help of the light o' the moon
A tree they cut, wi' fifteen nogs on each side,
To climb up the wa' of Newcastle toun.

[1] *Caugers*—Carriers.
[2] *Branks and Brecham*—Halter and cart-collar.

But when they cam to Newcastle toun,
And were alighted at the wa',
They fand thair tree three ells ower laigh,
They fand their stick baith short and sma'.

Then up spake the Laird's ain Jock;
"There's naething for't; the gates we maun force."—
But when they cam the gate until,
A proud porter withstood baith men and horse.

His neck in twa the Armstrangs wrang;
Wi' fute or hand he ne'er play'd pa!
His life and his keys at anes they hae ta'en,
And cast the body ahint the wa'.

Now sune they reach Newcastle jail,
And to the prisoner thus they call;
"Sleeps thou, wakes thou, Jock o' the Side,
Or art thou weary of thy thrall?"

Jock answers thus, wi' dolefu' tone;
"Aft, aft I wake—I seldom sleep:
But whae's this kens my name sae weel,
And thus to mese[1] my waes does seek?"—

Then out and spak the gude Laird's Jock,
"Now fear ye na, my billy," quo' he;
"For here are the Laird's Jock, the Laird's Wat,
And Hobbie Noble, come to set thee free."—

"Now haud thy tongue, my gude Laird's Jock,
For ever, alas! this canna be;

[1] *Mese*—Soothe.

For if a' Liddesdale were here the night,
The morn's the day that I maun die.

"Full fifteen stane o' Spanish iron,
They hae laid a' right sair on me;
Wi' locks and keys I am fast bound
Into this dungeon dark and dreirie."—

"Fear ye na that," quo' the Laird's Jock;
"A faint heart ne'er wan a fair ladie;
Work thou within, we'll work without,
And I'll be sworn we'll set thee free."—

The first strong door that they cam at,
They loosed it without a key;
The next chain'd door that they cam at,
They garr'd it a' to flinders flee.

The prisoner now upon his back
The Laird's Jock has gotten up fu' hie;
And down the stairs, him, airns and a',
Wi' nae sma' speed and joy brings he.

"Now, Jock, my man," quo' Hobbie Noble,
"Some o' his weight ye may lay on me."—
"I wat weel no!" quo' the Laird's ain Jock,
"I count him lighter than a flee."—

Sae out at the gates they a' are gane,
The prisoner's set on horseback hie;
And now wi' speed they've ta'en the gate
While ilk ain jokes fu' wantonlie:

"O Jock! sae winsomely ye ride,
Wi' baith your feet upon ae side;
Sae weel ye're harneist, and sae trig,
In troth ye sit like ony bride!"—

The night, tho' wat, they did na mind,
But hied them on fu' merrilie,
Until they cam to Cholerford brae,
Where the water ran like mountains hie.

But when they came to Cholerford,
There they met with an auld man;
Says—"Honest man, will the water ride?
Tell us in haste if that ye can."—

"I wat weel no," quo' the gude auld man;
"I hae lived here thretty years and three,
And I ne'er saw the Tyne sae big,
Nor running anes sae like a sea."—

Then out and spoke the Laird's saft Wat,
The greatest coward in the companie,
"Now halt, now halt! we need na try't
The day is come we a' maun die!"—

"Puir faint-hearted thief!" cried the Laird's ain Jock,
"There'll nae man die but him that's fie;[1]
I'll guide ye a' right safely thro';
Lift ye the pris'ner on ahint me."—

[1] *Fie*—Predestined.

Wi' that the water they hae ta'en,
  By ane's and twa's they a' swam thro';
"Here are we a' safe," quo' the Laird's Jock,
  "And, puir faint Wat, what think ye now?"—

They scarce the other brae had won,
  When twenty men they saw pursue;
Frae Newcastle toun they had been sent,
  A' English lads baith stout and true.

But when the land-sergeant [1] the water saw,
  "It winna ride, my lads," says he;
Then cried aloud—"The prisoner take,
  But leave the fetters, I pray, to me."—

"I wat weel no," quo' the Laird's ain Jock,
  "I'll keep them a'; shoon to my mare they'll be;
My gude bay mare—for I am sure,
  She has bought them a' right dear frae thee."—

Sae now they are on to Liddesdale,
  E'en as fast as they could them hie;
The prisoner is brought to's ain fireside,
  And there o's airns they mak him free.

"Now, Jock, my billy," quo' a' the three,
  "The day is comed thou wast to die;
But thou's as weel at thy ain ingle-side,
  Now sitting, I think, 'twixt thee and me."

[1] The land-sergeant (mentioned also in Hobbie Noble) was an officer under the warden, to whom was committed the apprehending of delinquents, and the care of the public peace.

THE BATTLE OF BOTHWELL BRIDGE

"O, BILLIE, billie, bonny billie,
Will ye go to the wood wi' me?
We'll ca' our horse hame masterless,
An' gar them trow slain men are we."—

"O no, O no!" says Earlstoun,
"For that's the thing that mauna be;
For I am sworn to Bothwell Hill,
Where I maun either gae or die."—

So Earlstoun rose in the morning,
An' mounted by the break o' day;
An' he has joined our Scottish lads,
As they were marching out the way.

"Now farewell, father, and farewell mother,
And fare ye weel, my sisters three;
An' fare ye weel, my Earlstoun,
For thee again I'll never see!"—

So they're awa' to Bothwell Hill,
An' waly they rode bonnily!
When the Duke o' Monmouth saw them comin',
He went to view their company.

"Ye're welcome lads," the Monmouth said,
"Ye're welcome, brave Scots lads, to me;
And sae are you, brave Earlstoun,
The foremost o' your company!

"But yield your weapons ane an a';
O yield your weapons, lads, to me;
For gin ye'll yield your weapons up,
Ye'se a' gae hame to your country."—

Out then spak a Lennox lad,
And waly but he spoke bonnily!
"I winna yield my weapons up,
To you nor nae man that I see."—

Then he set up the flag o' red,
A' set about wi' bonny blue;
"Since ye'll no cease, and be at peace,
See that ye stand by ither true."—

They stell'd their cannons on the height,
And showr'd their shot down in the howe;
An' beat our Scots lads even down,
Thick they lay slain on every knowe.

As e'er you saw the rain down fa',
Or yet the arrow frae the bow—
Sae our Scottish lads fell even down,
An' they lay slain on every knowe.

"O hold your hand," then Monmouth cry'd,
"Gie quarters to yon men for me!"—
But wicked Claver'se swore an oath,
His Cornet's death revenged sud be.

"O hold your hand," then Monmouth cry'd,
"If onything you'll do for me;
Hold up your hand, you cursed Græme,
Else a rebel to our King ye'll be."—

Then wicked Claver'se turn'd about,
I wot an angry man was he;
And he has lifted up his hat,
And cry'd, "God bless His Majesty!"—

Then he's awa' to London town,
Aye e'en as fast as he can dree;
Fause witnesses he has wi' him ta'en,
And ta'en Monmouth's head frae his body.

Alang the brae, beyond the brig,
Mony brave man lies cauld and still;
But lang we'll mind, and sair we'll rue,
The bloody battle of Bothwell Hill.

THE DÆMON-LOVER

"O WHERE have you been, my long, long love,
This long seven years and more?"—
"O I'm come to seek my former vows
Ye granted me before."—

"O hold your tongue of your former vows,
For they will breed sad strife;
O hold your tongue of your former vows,
For I am become a wife."

He turn'd him right and round about,
And the tear blinded his ee;
"I wad never hae trodden on Irish ground,
If it had not been for thee.

"I might hae had a king's daughter,
Far, far beyond the sea;
I might have had a king's daughter,
Had it not been for love o' thee."—

"If ye might have had a king's daughter,
Yersell ye had to blame;
Ye might have taken the king's daughter,
For ye kend that I was nane."—

"O faulse are the vows of womankind,
But fair is their faulse bodie;
I never wad hae trodden on Irish ground,
Had it not been for love o' thee."—

"If I was to leave my husband dear,
And my two babes also,
O what have you to take me to,
If with you I should go?"—

"I hae seven ships upon the sea,
The eighth brought me to land;
With four-and-twenty bold mariners,
And musie on every hand."

She has taken up her two little babes,
Kiss'd them baith cheek and chin;
"O fare ye weel, my ain two babes,
For I'll never see you again."

She set her foot upon the ship,
No mariners could she behold;
But the sails were o' the taffetie,
And the masts o' the beaten gold.

She had not sail'd a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
When dismal grew his countenance,
And drumlie grew his ee.

The masts that were like the beaten gold,
Bent not on the heaving seas;
But the sails, that were o' the taffetie,
Fill'd not in the east land breeze.

They had not sailed a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
Until she espied his cloven foot,
And she wept right bitterlie.

"O hold your tongue of your weeping," says he,
"Of your weeping now let me be;
I will show you how the lilies grow
On the banks of Italy."—

"O what hills are yon, yon pleasant hills,
That the sun shines sweetly on?"—
"O yon are the hills of heaven," he said,
"Where you will never win."—

"O whaten a mountain is yon," she said,
"All so dreary wi' frost and snow?"—
"O yon is the mountain of hell," he cried,
"Where you and I will go."

And aye when she turn'd her round about,
Aye taller he seem'd for to be;
Until that the tops o' that gallant ship
Nae taller were than he.

The clouds grew dark, and the wind grew loud,
And the levin fill'd her ee;
And waesome wail'd the snaw-white sprites
Upon the gurlie sea.

He strack the tap-mast wi' his hand,
The foremast wi' his knee;
And he brake that gallant ship in twain,
And sank her in the sea.

JOHNIE OF BREADISLEE

Johnie rose up in a May morning,
Call'd for water to wash his hands—
"Gar loose to me the gude graie dogs,
That are bound wi' iron bands."—

When Johnie's mother gat word o' that,
Her hands for dule she wrang—
"O Johnie! for my benison,
To the greenwood dinna gang!

"Eneugh ye hae o' gude wheat bread,
And eneugh o' the blood-red wine;
And, therefore, for nae venison, Johnie,
I pray ye, stir frae hame."—

But Johnie's busk't up his gude bend bow,
His arrows, ane by ane;
And he has gane to Durrisdeer,
To hunt the dun deer down.

As he came down by Merriemass
And in by the benty line,
There has he espied a deer lying
Aneath a bush of ling.

JOHNIE OF BREADISLEE

Johnie he shot, and the dun deer lap,
And he wounded her on the side;
But, atween the water and the brae,
His hounds they laid her pride.

And Johnie has bryttled the deer sae weel,
That he's had out her liver and lungs;
And wi' these he has feasted his bluidy hounds,
As if they had been earl's sons.

They ate sae much o' the venison,
And drank sae much o' the blude,
That Johnie and a' his bluidy hounds
Fell asleep as they had been dead.

And by there came a silly auld carle,
An ill death mote he die!
For he's awa' to Hislinton,
Where the Seven Foresters did lie.

"What news, what news, ye grey-headed carle,
What news bring ye to me?"—
"I bring nae news," said the grey-headed carle,
"Save what these eyes did see.

"As I came down by Merriemass,
And down among the scroggs,[1]
The bonniest childe that ever I saw
Lay sleeping amang his dogs.

"The shirt that was upon his back
Was o' the Holland fine;

[1] *Scroggs*—Stunted trees.

The doublet which was over that
Was o' the lincome twine.

"The buttons that were on his sleeve
Were o' the goud sae gude;
The gude graie hounds he lay amang,
Their mouths were dyed wi' blude."—

Then out and spake the First Forester,
The heid man ower them a'—
"If this be Johnie o' Breadislee,
Nae nearer will we draw."—

But up and spak the Sixth Forester,
(His sister's son was he,)
"If this be Johnie o' Breadislee,
We soon shall gar him die!"

The first flight of arrows the Foresters shot,
They wounded him on the knee;
And out and spak the Seventh Forester,
"The next will gar him die."

Johnie's set his baek against an aik,
His fute against a stane;
And he has slain the Seven Foresters,
He has slain them a' but ane.

He has broke three ribs in that ane's side,
But and his collar bane;
He's laid him twa-fald ower his steed,
Bade him carry the tidings hame.

"O is there nae a bonnie bird,
Can sing as I can say;
Could flee away to my mother's bower,
And tell to fetch Johnie away?"—[1]

The starling flew to his mother's window stane,
It whistled and it sang;
And aye the ower word o' the tune
Was—"Johnie tarries lang!"

They made a rod o' hazel bush,
Another o' the slae-thorn tree,
And mony, mony were the men
At the fetching o'er Johnie.

Then out and spak his auld mother,
And fast her tears did fa'—
"Ye wad nae be warn'd, my son Johnie,
Frae the hunting to bide awa'.

"Aft hae I brought to Breadislee,
The less gear and the mair,
But I ne'er brought to Breadislee,
What grieved my heart sae sair.

[1] [Perhaps here should be inserted the beautiful stanza preserved by Finlay, so descriptive, as he remarks, of the languor of death:

"There's no a bird in a' this forest
Will do as meikle for me,
As dip its wing in the wan water,
And straik it on my ee-bree."

MOTHERWELL, p. 22.]

"But wae betyde that silly auld carle!
An ill death shall he die!
For the highest tree in Merriemas
Shall be his morning's fee."

Now Johnie's gude bend bow is broke,
And his gude graie dogs are slain;
And his bodie lies dead in Durrisdeer,
And his hunting it is done.

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